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The World's Classics

LVI

THE WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER—II

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW
LEIPZIG NEW YORK TORONTO
MELBOURNE CAPETOWN BOMBAY
CALCUTTA MADRAS SHANGHAI
HUMPHREY MILFORD
PUBLISHER TO THE
UNIVERSITY

THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

FROM THE TEXT
OF W. W. SKEAT

VOLUME II

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Born: London . . . . about 1340
Died: Westminster . . 25 October 1400

'Troilus and Cressida' was written between 1379 *and* 1383, *'The Hous of Fame' between* 1383 *and* 1384, *and 'The Legend of Good Women' between* 1385 *and* 1386. *In 'The World's Classics' they were first published as Vol. II of Chaucer's Poetical Works in* 1903, *and reprinted in* 1910 *and* 1930.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD
BY JOHN JOHNSON, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

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TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

BOOK I

1. The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his aventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of joye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thou help me for t' endyte
Thise woful vers, that wepen as I wryte!

2. To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment,
Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in peyne;
Help me, that am the sorwful instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne!
For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery fere,
And, to a sorwful tale, a sory chere.

3. For I, that god of Loves servaunts serve,
Ne dar to Love, for myn unlyklinesse,
Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfor sterve,
So fer am I fro his help in derknesse;
But nathelees, if this may doon gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause avayle,
Have he my thank, and myn be this travayle!

4. But ye loveres, that bathen in gladnesse,
If any drope of pitee in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed hevinesse
That ye han felt, and on the adversitee
Of othere folk, and thenketh how that ye
Han felt that Love dorste yow displese;
Or ye han wonne him with to greet an ese.

5. And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as ye may after here,
That love hem bringe in hevene to solas,
And eek for me preyeth to god so dere,
That I have might to shewe, in som manere,
Swich peyne and wo as Loves folk endure,
In Troilus unsely aventure.

6. And biddeth eek for hem that been despeyred
In love, that never nil recovered be,
And eek for hem that falsly been apeyred
Thorugh wikked tonges, be it he or she;
Thus biddeth god, for his benignitee,
To graunte hem sone out of this world to pace,
That been despeyred out of Loves grace.

7. And biddeth eek for hem that been at ese,
That god hem graunte ay good perseveraunce,
And sende hem might hir ladies so to plese,
That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
For so hope I my soule best avaunce,
To preye for hem that Loves servaunts be,
And wryte hir wo, and live in charitee.

8. And for to have of hem compassioun
As though I were hir owene brother dere.
Now herkeneth with a gode entencioun,
For now wol I gon streight to my matere,
In whiche ye may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus, in loving of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook him er she deyde.

---

9. It is wel wist, how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troye-wardes, and the citee longe
Assegeden neigh ten yeer er they stente,
And, in diverse wyse and oon entente,
The ravisshing to wreken of Eleyne,
Bv Paris doon, they wroughten al hir peyne.

10. Now fil it so, that in the toun ther was
Dwellinge a lord of greet auctoritee,
A gret devyn that cleped was Calkas,
That in science so expert was, that he
Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be,
By answere of his god, that highte thus,
Daun Phebus or Appollo Delphicus.

11. So whan this Calkas knew by calculinge,
And eek by answere of this Appollo,
That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe,
Thorugh which that Troye moste been for-do,
He caste anoon out of the toun to go;
For wel wiste he, by sort, that Troye sholde
Destroyed been, ye, wolde who-so nolde.

12. For which, for to departen softely
Took purpos ful this forknowinge wyse,
And to the Grekes ost ful prively
He stal anoon; and they, in curteys wyse,
Him deden bothe worship and servyse,
In trust that he hath conning hem to rede
In every peril which that is to drede.

13. The noyse up roos, whan it was first aspyed,
Thorugh al the toun, and generally was spoken,
That Calkas traytor fled was, and allyed
With hem of Grece; and casten to ben wroken
On him that falsly hadde his feith broken;
And seyden, he and al his kin at ones
Ben worthy for to brennen, fel and bones.

14. Now hadde Calkas left, in this meschaunce,
Al unwist of this false and wikked dede,
His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce,
For of hir lyf she was ful sore in drede,
As she that niste what was best to rede;
For bothe a widowe was she, and allone
Of any freend, to whom she dorste hir mone.

15. Criseyde was this lady name a-right;
As to my dome, in al Troyes citee
Nas noon so fair, for passing every wight
So aungellyk was hir natyf beautee,
That lyk a thing inmortal semed she,
As doth an hevenish parfit creature,
That doun were sent in scorning of nature.

16. This lady, which that al-day herde at ere
Hir fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,
Wel nigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
In widewes habit large of samit broun,
On knees she fil biforn Ector a-doun;
With pitous voys, and tendrely wepinge,
His mercy bad, hir-selven excusinge.

17. Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorwfully bigoon,
And that she was so fair a creature;
Of his goodnesse he gladed hir anoon,
And seyde, 'lat your fadres treson goon
Forth with mischaunce, and ye your-self, in joye,
Dwelleth with us, whyl you good list, in Troye.

18. And al th'onour that men may doon yow have,
As ferforth as your fader dwelled here,
Ye shul han, and your body shal men save,
As fer as I may ought enquere or here.'
And she him thonked with ful humble chere,
And ofter wolde, and it hadde ben his wille,
And took hir leve, and hoom, and held hir stille.

19. And in hir hous she abood with swich meynee
As to hir honour nede was to holde;
And whyl she was dwellinge in that citee,
Kepte hir estat, and both of yonge and olde
Ful wel beloved, and wel men of hir tolde.
But whether that she children hadde or noon,
I rede it nought; therfore I lete it goon.

20. The thinges fellen, as they doon of werre,
Bitwixen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte;
For som day boughten they of Troye it derre,
And eft the Grekes founden no thing softe
The folk of Troye; and thus fortune onlofte,
And under eft, gan hem to wheelen bothe
After hir cours, ay whyl they were wrothe.

21. But how this toun com to destruccioun
Ne falleth nought to purpos me to telle;
For it were here a long disgressioun
Fro my matere, and yow to longe dwelle.
But the Troyane gestes, as they felle,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dyte,
Who-so that can, may rede hem as they wryte.

22. But though that Grekes hem of Troye shetten,
And hir citee bisegede al a-boute,
Hir olde usage wolde they not letten,
As for to honoure hir goddes ful devoute;
But aldermost in honour, out of doute,
They hadde a relik hight Palladion,
That was hir trist a-boven everichon.

23. And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty Ver the pryme,
And swote smellen floures whyte and rede,
In sondry wyses shewed, as I rede,
The folk of Troye hir observaunces olde,
Palladiones feste for to holde.

24. And to the temple, in al hir beste wyse,
In general, ther wente many a wight,
To herknen of Palladion the servyse;
And namely, so many a lusty knight,
So many a lady fresh and mayden bright,
Ful wel arayed, bothe moste and leste,
Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste.

25. Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habite blak ; but nathelees,
Right as our firste lettre is now an A,
In beautee first so stood she, makelees ;
Hir godly looking gladede al the prees.
Nas never seyn thing to ben preysed derre,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre

26. As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichoon
That hir bihelden in hir blake wede ;
And yet she stood ful lowe and stille alloon,
Bihinden othere folk, in litel brede,
And neigh the dore, ay under shames drede,
Simple of a-tyr, and debonaire of chere,
With ful assured loking and manere.

27. This Troilus, as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knightes, ladde hem up and doun
In thilke large temple on every syde,
Biholding ay the ladyes of the toun,
Now here, now there, for no devocioun
Hadde he to noon, to reven him his reste,
But gan to preyse and lakken whom him leste.

28. And in his walk ful fast he gan to wayten
If knight or squyer of his companye
Gan for to syke, or lete his eyen bayten
On any woman that he coude aspye ;
He wolde smyle, and holden it folye,
And seye him thus, 'god wot, she slepeth softe
For love of thee, whan thou tornest ful ofte !

29. I have herd told, pardieux, of your livinge,
Ye lovers, and your lewede observaunces,
And which a labour folk han in winninge
Of love, and, in the keping, which doutaunces ;
And whan your preye is lost, wo and penaunces ;
O verrey foles ! nyce and blinde be ye ;
Ther nis not oon can war by other be.'

30. And with that word he gan cast up the browe,
Ascaunces, 'lo! is this nought wysly spoken?'
At which the god of love gan loken rowe
Right for despyt, and shoop for to ben wroken;
He kidde anoon his bowe nas not broken;
For sodeynly he hit him at the fulle;
And yet as proud a pekok can he pulle.

31. O blinde world, O blinde entencioun!
How ofte falleth al th' effect contraire
Of surquidrye and foul presumpcioun;
For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire.
This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And litel weneth that he moot descenden.
But al-day fayleth thing that foles wenden.

32. As proude Bayard ginneth for to skippe
Out of the wey, so priketh him his corn,
Til he a lash have of the longe whippe,
Than thenketh he 'though I prannce al biforn
First in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn,
Yet am I but a hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my feres drawe.'

33. So ferde it by this fers and proude knight;
Though he a worthy kinges sone were,
And wende no-thing hadde had swiche might
Ayens his wil that sholde his herte stere,
Yet with a look his herte wex a-fere,
That he, that now was most in pryde above,
Wex sodeynly most subget un-to love.

34. For-thy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wyse, proude, and worthy folkes alle,
To scornen Love, which that so sone can
The freedom of your hertes to him thralle;
For ever it was, and ever it shal bifalle,
That Love is he that alle thing may binde;
For may no man for-do the lawe of kinde.

35. That this be sooth, hath preved and doth yit ;
For this trowe I ye knowen, alle or some,
Men reden not that folk han gretter wit
Than they that han be most with love y-nome ;
And strengest folk ben therwith overcome,
The worthiest and grettest of degree ;
This was, and is, and yet men shal it see.

36. And trewelich it sit wel to be so ;
For alderwysest han ther-with ben plesed ;
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han been conforted most and esed ;
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed,
And worthy folk maad worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame.

37. Now sith it may not goodly be withstonde,
And is a thing so vertuous in kinde,
Refuseth not to Love for to be bonde,
Sin, as him-selven list, he may yow binde.
The yerde is bet that bowen wole and winde
Than that that brest ; and therfor I yow rede
To folwen him that so wel can yow lede.

38. But for to tellen forth in special
As of this kinges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thing collateral,
Of him thenke I my tale for to holde,
Bothe of his joye, and of his cares colde ;
And al his werk, as touching this matere,
For I it gan, I wil ther-to refere.

39. With-inne the temple he wente him forth pleyinge,
This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
On this lady and now on that lokinge,
Wher-so she were of toune, or of withoute :
And up-on cas bifel, that thorugh a route
His eye perced, and so depe it wente,
Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.

40. And sodeynly he wex ther-with astoned,
And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty wyse:
'O mercy, god!' thoughte he, 'wher hastow woned,
That art so fair and goodly to devyse?'
Ther-with his herte gan to sprede and ryse,
And softe sighed, lest men mighte him here,
And caughte a-yein his firste pleyinge chere.

41. She nas not with the leste of hir stature,
But alle hir limes so wel answeringe
Weren to womanhode, that creature
Was never lasse mannish in seminge.
And eek the pure wyse of here meninge
Shewede wel, that men might in hir gesse
Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.

42. To Troilus right wonder wel with-alle
Gan for to lyke hir mening and hir chere,
Which somdel deynous was, for she leet falle
Hir look a lite a-side, in swich manere,
Ascaunces, 'what! may I not stonden here?'
And after that hir loking gan she lighte,
That never thoughte him seen so good a sighte.

43. And of hir look in him ther gan to quiken
So greet desir, and swich affecciouu,
That in his hertes botme gan to stiken
Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun:
And though he erst hadde poured up and doun,
He was tho glad his hornes in to shrinke;
Unnethes wiste he how to loke or winke.

44. Lo, he that leet him-selven so konninge,
And scorned hem that Loves peynes dryen,
Was ful unwar that Love hadde his dwellinge
With-inne the subtile stremes of hir yën;
That sodeynly him thoughte he felte dyen,
Right with hir look, the spirit in his herte;
Blessed be Love, that thus can folk converte!

45. She, this in blak, lykinge to Troilus,
Over alle thing he stood for to biholde;
Ne his desir, ne wherfor he stood thus,
He neither chere made, ne worde tolde;
But from a-fer, his maner for to holde,
On other thing his look som-tyme he caste,
And eft on hir, whyl that servyse laste.

46. And after this, not fulliche al awhaped,
Out of the temple al esiliche he wente,
Repentinge him that he hadde ever y-japed
Of Loves folk, lest fully the descente
Of scorn fille on him-self; but, what he mente,
Lest it were wist on any maner syde,
His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde.

47. Whan he was fro the temple thus departed,
He streyght anoon un-to his paleys torneth,
Right with hir look thurgh-shoten and thurgh-darted,
Al feyneth he in lust that he sojorneth;
And al his chere and speche also he borneth;
And ay, of Loves servants every whyle,
Him-self to wrye, at hem he gan to smyle.

48. And seyde, 'lord, so ye live al in lest,
Ye loveres! for the conningest of yow,
That serveth most ententiflich and best,
Him tit as often harm ther-of as prow;
Your hyre is quit ayein, ye, god wot how!
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good servyse;
In feith, your ordre is ruled in good wyse!

49. In noun-certeyn ben alle your observaunces,
But it a sely fewe poyntes be;
Ne no-thing asketh so grete attendaunces
As doth your lay, and that knowe alle ye;
But that is not the worste, as mote I thee;
But, tolde I yow the worste poynt, I leve,
Al seyde I sooth, ye wolden at me greve!

50. But tak this, that ye loveres ofte eschuwe,
Or elles doon of good entencioun,
Ful ofte thy lady wole it misconstrue,
And deme it harm in hir opinioun ;
And yet if she, for other enchesoun,
Be wrooth, than shalt thou han a groyn anoon :
Lord ! wel is him that may be of yow oon !'

51. But for al this, whan that he say his tyme,
He held his pees, non other bote him gayned ;
For love bigan his fetheres so to lyme,
That wel unnethe un-to his folk he feyned
That othere besye nedes him destrayned ;
For wo was him, that what to doon he niste,
But bad his folk to goon wher that hem liste.

52. And whan that he in chaumbre was allone,
He doun up-on his beddes feet him sette,
And first he gan to syke, and eft to grone,
And thoughte ay on hir so, with-outen lette,
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hir saw a temple, and al the wyse
Right of hir loke, and gan it newe avyse.

53. Thus gan he make a mirour of his minde,
In which he saugh al hoolly hir figure ;
And that he wel coude in his herte finde,
It was to him a right good aventure
To love swich oon, and if he dide his cure
To serven hir, yet mighte he falle in grace,
Or elles, for oon of hir servaunts pace.

54. Imagininge that travaille nor grame
Ne mighte, for so goodly oon, be lorn
As she, ne him for his desir ne shame,
Al were it wist, but in prys and up-born
Of alle lovers wel more than biforn ;
Thus argumented he in his ginninge,
Ful unavysed of his wo cominge.

55. Thus took he purpos Loves craft to suwe,
And thoughte he wolde werken prively,
First, to hyden his desir in muwe
From every wight y-born, al-outrely,
But he mighte ought recovered be therby;
Remembring him, that love to wyde y-blowe
Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe.

56. And over all this, yet muchel more he thoughte
What for to speke, and what to holden inne,
And what to arten hir to love he soughte,
And on a song anoon-right to biginne,
And gan loude on his sorwe for to winne;
For with good hope he gan fully assente
Criseyde for to love, and nought repente.

57. And of his song nought only the sentence,
As writ myn autour called Lollius,
But pleynly, save our tonges difference,
I dar wel sayn, in al that Troilus
Seyde in his song; lo! every word right thus
As I shal seyn; and who-so list it here,
Lo! next this vers, he may it finden here.

Cantus Troili

58. 'If no love is, O god, what fele I so?
And if love is, what thing and whiche is he?
If love be good, from whennes comth my wo?
If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me,
When every torment and adversitee
That cometh of him, may to me savory thinke;
For ay thurst I, the more that I it drinke.

59. And if that at myn owene lust I brenne,
Fro whennes cometh my wailing and my pleynte?
If harme agree me, wher-to pleyne I thenne?
I noot, ne why unwery that I feynte.
O quike deeth, O swete harm so queynte,
How may of thee in me swich quantitee,
But-if that I consente that it be?

60. And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Compleyne, y-wis ; thus possed to and fro,
Al sterelees with-inne a boot am I
A-mid the see, by-twixen windes two,
That in contrarie stonden ever-mo.
Allas ! what is this wonder maladye ?
For hete of cold, for cold of hete, I dye.'

61. And to the god of Love thus seyde he
With pitous voys, 'O lord, now youres is
My spirit, which that oughte youres be.
Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought to this;
But whether goddesse or womman, y-wis,
She be, I noot, which that ye do me serve ;
But as hir man I wole ay live and sterve.

62. Ye stonden in hire eyen mightily,
As in a place un-to your vertu digne ;
Wherfore, lord, if my servyse or I
May lyke yow, so beth to me benigne ;
For myn estat royal here I resigne
In-to hir hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere.'

63. In him ne deyned sparen blood royal
The fyr of love, wher-fro god me blesse,
Ne him forbar in no degree, for al
His vertu or his excellent prowesse ;
But held him as his thral lowe in distresse,
And brende him so in sondry wyse ay newe,
That sixty tyme a day he loste his hewe.

64. So muche, day by day, his owene thought,
For lust to hir, gan quiken and encrese,
That every other charge he sette at nought ;
For-thy ful ofte, his hote fyr to cese,
To seen hir goodly look he gan to prese ;
For ther-by to ben esed wel he wende,
And ay the neer he was, the more he brende.

65. For ay the neer the fyr, the hotter is,
This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye.
But were he fer or neer, I dar seye this,
By night or day, for wysdom or folye,
His herte, which that is his brestes yë,
Was ay on hir, that fairer was to sene
Than ever was Eleyne or Polixene.

66. Eek of the day ther passed nought an houre
That to him-self a thousand tyme he seyde,
'Good goodly, to whom serve I and laboure,
As I best can, now wolde god, Criseyde,
Ye wolden on me rewe er that I deyde!
My dere herte, allas! myn hele and hewe
And lyf is lost, but ye wole on me rewe.'

67. Alle othere dredes weren from him fledde,
Bothe of th' assege and his savacioun;
Ne in him desyr noon othere fownes bredde
But arguments to this conclusioun,
That she on him wolde han compassioun,
And he to be hir man, whyl he may dure;
Lo, here his lyf, and from the deeth his cure!

68. The sharpe shoures felle of armes preve,
That Ector or his othere bretheren diden,
Ne made him only ther-fore ones meve;
And yet was he, wher-so men wente or riden,
Founde oon the best, and lengest tyme abiden
Ther peril was, and dide eek such travayle
In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle.

69. But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to madde,
But only, lo, for this conclusioun,
To lyken hir the bet for his renoun;
Fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That alle the Grekes as the deeth him dredde.

70. And fro this forth tho refte him Love his sleep,
And made his mete his foo ; and eek his sorwe
Can multiplye, that, who-so toke keep,
It shewed in his hewe, bothe eve and morwe ;
Therfor a title he gan him for to borwe
Of other syknesse, lest of him men wende
That the hote fyr of love him brende.

71. And seyde, he hadde a fever and ferde amis ;
But how it was, certayn, can I not seye,
If that his lady understood not this,
Or feyned hir she niste, oon of the tweye ;
But wel I rede that, by no maner weye,
Ne semed it [as] that she of him roughte,
Nor of his peyne, or what-so-ever he thoughte.

72. But than fel to this Troylus such wo,
That he was wel neigh wood ; for ay his drede
Was this, that she som wight had loved so,
That never of him she wolde have taken hede ;
For whiche him thoughte he felte his herte blede.
Ne of his wo ne dorste he not biginne
To tellen it, for al this world to winne.

73. But whanne he hadde a space fro his care,
Thus to him-self ful ofte he gan to pleyne ;
He sayde, 'O fool, now art thou in the snare,
That whilom japedest at Loves peyne ;
Now artow hent, now gnaw thyn owene cheyne ;
Thou were ay wont eche lovere reprehende
Of thing fro which thou canst thee nat defende.

74. What wole now every lover seyn of thee,
If this be wist, but ever in thyn absence
Laughen in scorn, and seyn, " lo, ther gooth he,
That is the man of so gret sapience,
That held us loveres leest in reverence !
Now, thonked be god, he may goon in the daunce
Of hem that Love list febly for to avaunce !

75. But, O thou woful Troilus, god wolde,
Sin thow most loven thurgh thy destinee,
That thow beset were on swich oon that sholde
Knowe al thy wo, al lakkede hir pitee:
But al so cold in love, towardes thee,
Thy lady is, as frost in winter mone,
And thou fordoon, as snow in fyr is sone."

76. God wolde I were aryved in the port
Of deeth, to which my sorwe wil me lede!
A, lord, to me it were a greet comfort;
Then were I quit of languisshing in drede.
For by myn hidde sorwe y-blowe on brede
I shal bi-japed been a thousand tyme
More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.

77. But now help god, and ye, swete, for whom
I pleyne, y-caught, ye, never wight so faste!
O mercy, dere herte, and help me from
The deeth, for I, whyl that my lyf may laste,
More than my-self wol love yow to my laste.
And with som freendly look gladeth me, swete,
Though never more thing ye me bi-hete!'

78. This wordes and ful manye an-other to
He spak, and called ever in his compleynte
Hir name, for to tellen hir his wo,
Til neigh that he in salte teres dreynte.
Al was for nought, she herde nought his pleynte;
And whan that he bithoughte on that folye,
A thousand fold his wo gan mutiplye.

79. Bi-wayling in his chambre thus allone,
A freend of his, that called was Pandare,
Com ones in unwar, and herde him grone,
And sey his freend in swich distresse and care:
'Allas!' quod he, 'who causeth al this fare?
O mercy, god! what unhap may this mene?
Han now thus sone Grekes maad yow lene?

80. Or hastow som remors of conscience,
And art now falle in som devocioun,
And waylest for thy sinne and thyn offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun?
God save hem that bi-seged han our toun,
And so can leye our jolytee on presse,
And bring our lusty folk to holinesse!'

81. These wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
That with swich thing he mighte him angry maken,
And with an angre don his sorwe falle,
As for the tyme, and his corage awaken;
But wel he wiste, as fer as tonges spaken,
Ther nas a man of gretter hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

82. 'What cas,' quod Troilus, 'or what aventure
Hath gyded thee to see my languisshinge,
That am refus of every creature?
But for the love of god, at my preyinge,
Go henne a-way, for certes, my deyinge
Wol thee disese, and I mot nedes deye;
Ther-for go wey, ther is no more to seye.

83. But if thou wene I be thus syk for drede,
It is not so, and ther-for scorne nought;
Ther is a-nother thing I take of hede
Wel more than ought the Grekes han y-wrought,
Which cause is of my deeth, for sorwe and thought.
But though that I now telle thee it ne leste,
Be thou nought wrooth, I hyde it for the beste.'

84. This Pandare, that neigh malt for wo and routhe,
Ful often seyde, 'allas! what may this be?
Now freend,' quod he, 'if ever love or trouthe
Hath been, or is, bi-twixen thee and me,
Ne do thou never swiche a crueltee
To hyde fro thy freend so greet a care;
Wostow nought wel that it am I, Pandare?

85. I wole parten with thee al thy peyne,
If it be so I do thee no comfort,
As it is freendes right, sooth for to seyne,
To entreparten wo, as glad desport.
I have, and shal, for trewe or fals report,
In wrong and right y-loved thee al my lyve;
Hyd not thy wo fro me, but telle it blyve.'

86. Then gan this sorwful Troilus to syke,
And seyde him thus, 'god leve it be my beste
To telle it thee; for, sith it may thee lyke,
Yet wole I telle it, though myn herte breste;
And wel wot I thou mayst do me no reste.
But lest thow deme I truste not to thee,
Now herkne, freend, for thus it stant with me.

87. Love, a-yeins the which who-so defendeth
Him-selven most, him alder-lest avayleth,
With desespeir so sorwfully me offendeth,
That streyght un-to the deeth myn herte sayleth.
Ther-to desyr so brenningly me assaylleth,
That to ben slayn it were a gretter joye
To me than king of Grece been and Troye!

88. Suffiseth this, my fulle freend Pandare,
That I have seyd, for now wostow my wo;
And for the love of god, my colde care
So hyd it wel, I telle it never to mo;
For harmes mighte folwen, mo than two,
If it were wist; but be thou in gladnesse,
And lat me sterve, unknowe, of my distresse.'

89. 'How hastow thus unkindely and longe
Hid this fro me, thou fool?' quod Pandarus;
'Paraunter thou might after swich oon longe,
That myn avys anoon may helpen us.'
'This were a wonder thing,' quod Troilus,
'Thou coudest never in love thy-selven wisse;
How devel maystow bringen me to blisse?'

90. 'Ye, Troilus, now herke,' quod Pandare,
'Though I be nyce; it happeth ofte so,
That oon that exces doth ful yvele fare
By good counseyl can kepe his freend ther-fro.
I have my-self eek seyn a blind man go
There-as he fel that coude loke wyde;
A fool may eek a wys man ofte gyde.

91. A whetston is no kerving instrument,
And yet it maketh sharpe kerving-tolis.
And ther thow woost that I have ought miswent,
Eschewe thou that, for swich thing to thee scole is;
Thus ofte wyse men ben war by folis.
If thou do so, thy wit is wel biwared;
By his contrarie is every thing declared.

92. For how might ever sweetnesse have be knowe
To him that never tasted bitternesse?
Ne no man may be inly glad, I trowe,
That never was in sorwe or som distresse;
Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthinesse,
Ech set by other, more for other semeth;
As men may see; and so the wyse it demeth.

93. Sith thus of two contraries is a lore,
I, that have in love so ofte assayed
Grevaunces, oughte conne, and wel the more
Counsayllen thee of that thou art amayed.
Eek thee ne oughte nat ben yvel apayed,
Though I desyre with thee for to bere
Thyn hevy charge; it shal the lasse dere.

94. I woot wel that it fareth thus by me
As to thy brother Parys an herdesse,
Which that y-cleped was Oënone,
Wroot in a compleynt of hir hevinesse:
Ye sey the lettre that she wroot, y gesse?'
'Nay, never yet, y-wis,' quod Troilus.
'Now,' quod Pandare, 'herkneth; it was thus.—

95. "Phebus, that first fond art of medicyne,"
Quod she, "and coude in every wightes care
Remede and reed, by herbes he knew fyne,
Yet to him-self his conninge was ful bare;
For love hadde him so bounden in a snare,
Al for the doughter of the kinge Admete,
That al his craft ne coude his sorwe bete."—

96. Right so fare I, unhappily for me;
I love oon best, and that me smerteth sore;
And yet, paraunter, can I rede thee,
And not my-self; repreve me no more.
I have no cause, I woot wel, for to sore
As doth an hauk that listeth for to pleye,
But to thyn help yet somwhat can I seye.

97. And of o thing right siker maystow be,
That certayn, for to deyen in the peyne,
That I shal never-mo discoveren thee;
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat restreyne
Thee fro thy love, thogh that it were Eleyne,
That is thy brotheres wyf, if ich it wiste;
Be what she be, and love hir as thee liste.

98. Therfore, as freend fullich in me assure,
And tel me plat what is thyn enchesoun,
And final cause of wo that ye endure;
For douteth no-thing, myn entencioun
Nis nought to yow of reprehencioun
To speke as now, for no wight may bireve
A man to love, til that him list to leve.

99. And witeth wel, that bothe two ben vyces,
Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leve;
But wel I woot, the mene of it no vyce is,
For for to trusten sum wight is a preve
Of trouthe, and for-thy wolde I fayn remeve
Thy wrong conceyte, and do thee som wight triste,
Thy wo to telle; and tel me, if thee liste.

100. The wyse seyth, "wo him that is allone,
For, and he falle, he hath noon help to ryse";
And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thy mone;
For this nis not, certeyn, the nexte wyse
To winnen love, as techen us the wyse,
To walwe and wepe as Niobe the quene,
Whos teres yet in marbel been y-sene.

101. Lat be thy weping and thy drerinesse,
And lat us lissen wo with other speche;
So may thy woful tyme seme lesse.
Delyte not in wo thy wo to seche,
As doon thise foles that hir sorwes eche
With sorwe, whan they han misaventure,
And listen nought to seche hem other cure.

102. Men seyn, "to wrecche is consolacioun
To have an-other felawe in his peyne";
That oughte wel ben our opinioun,
For, bothe thou and I, of love we pleyne;
So ful of sorwe am I, soth for to seyne,
That certeynly no more harde grace
May sitte on me, for-why there is no space.

103. If god wole thou art not agast of me,
Lest I wolde of thy lady thee bigyle,
Thow wost thy-self whom that I love, pardee,
As I best can, gon sithen longe whyle.
And sith thou wost I do it for no wyle,
And sith I am he that thou tristest most,
Tel me sumwhat, sin al my wo thou wost.'

104. Yet Troilus, for al this, no word seyde,
But longe he lay as stille as he ded were;
And after this with sykinge he abreyde,
And to Pandarus voys he lente his ere,
And up his eyen caste he, that in fere
Was Pandarus, lest that in frenesye
He sholde falle, or elles sone dye:

105. And cryde 'a-wake' ful wonderly and sharpe;
'What? slombrestow as in a lytargye?
Or artow lyk an asse to the harpe,
That hereth soun, whan men the strenges plye,
But in his minde of that no melodye
May sinken, him to glade, for that he
So dul is of his bestialitee?'

106. And with that Pandare of his wordes stente;
But Troilus yet him no word answerde,
For-why to telle nas not his entente
To never no man, for whom that he so ferde.
For it is seyd, 'man maketh ofte a yerde
With which the maker is him-self y-beten
In sondry maner,' as thise wyse treten,

107. And namely, in his counseyl tellinge
That toucheth love that oughte be secree;
For of him-self it wolde y-nough outspringe,
But-if that it the bet governed be.
Eek som-tyme it is craft to seme flee
Fro thing which in effect men hunte faste;
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.

108. But nathelees, when he had herd him crye
'Awake!' he gan to syke wonder sore,
And seyde, 'freend, though that I stille lye,
I am not deef; now pees, and cry no more;
For I have herd thy wordes and thy lore;
But suffre me my mischef to biwayle,
For thy proverbes may me nought avayle.

109. Nor other cure canstow noon for me.
Eek I nil not be cured, I wol deye;
What knowe I of the quene Niobe?
Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I thee preye.'
'No,' quod tho Pandarus, 'therfore I seye,
Swich is delyt of foles to biwepe
Hir wo, but seken bote they ne kepe.

110. Now knowe I that ther reson in thee fayleth.
But tel me, if I wiste what she were
For whom that thee al this misaunter ayleth,
Dorstestow that I tolde hir in hir ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy-self for fere,
And hir bisoughte on thee to han som routhe?'
'Why, nay,' quod he, 'by god and by my trouthe!'

111. 'What? not as bisily,' quod Pandarus.
'As though myn owene lyf lay on this nede?'
'No, certes, brother,' quod this Troilus.
'And why?'—'For that thou sholdest never spede.'
'Wostow that wel?'—'Ye, that is out of drede,'
Quod Troilus, 'for al that ever ye conne,
She nil to noon swich wrecche as I be wonne.'

112. Quod Pandarus, 'allas! what may this be,
That thou despeyred art thus causelees?
What? liveth not thy lady? *benedicite!*
How wostow so that thou art gracelees?
Swich yvel is not alwey botelees.
Why, put not impossible thus thy cure,
Sin thing to come is ofte in aventure.

113. I graunte wel that thou endurest wo
As sharp as doth he, Ticius, in helle,
Whos stomak foules tyren ever-mo
That highte volturis, as bokes telle.
But I may not endure that thou dwelle
In so unskilful an opinioun
That of thy wo is no curacioun.

114. But ones niltow, for thy coward herte,
And for thyn ire and folish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust, tellen of thy sorwes smerte,
Ne to thyn owene help do bisinesse
As muche as speke a resoun more or lesse,
But lyest as he that list of no-thing recche.
What womman coude love swich a wrecche?

115. What may she demen other of thy deeth,
If thou thus deye, and she not why it is,
But that for fere is yolden up thy breeth,
For Grekes han biseged us, y-wis?
Lord, which a thank than shaltow han of this!
Thus wol she seyn, and al the toun at ones,
"The wrecche is deed, the devel have his bones!"

116. Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele;
But, love a woman that she woot it nought,
And she wol quyte that thou shalt not fele;
Unknowe, unkist, and lost that is unsought.
What! many a man hath love ful dere y-bought
Twenty winter that his lady wiste,
That never yet his lady mouth he kiste.

117. What? shulde he therfor fallen in despeyr,
Or be recreaunt for his owene tene,
Or sleen him-self, al be his lady fayr?
Nay, nay, but ever in oon be fresh and grene
To serve and love his dere hertes quene,
And thenke it is a guerdoun hir to serve
A thousand-fold more than he can deserve.'

118. And of that word took hede Troilus,
And thoughte anoon what folye he was inne,
And how that sooth him seyde Pandarus,
That for to sleen him-self mighte he not winne,
But bothe doon unmanhod and a sinne,
And of his deeth his lady nought to wyte;
For of his wo, god woot, she knew ful lyte.

119. And with that thought he gan ful sore syke,
And seyde, 'allas! what is me best to do?'
To whom Pandare answerde, 'if thee lyke,
The best is that thou telle me thy wo;
And have my trouthe, but thou it finde so,
I be thy bote, or that it be ful longe,
To peces do me drawe, and sithen hange!'

120. 'Ye, so thou seyst,' quod Troilus tho, 'allas!
But, god wot, it is not the rather so;
Ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
For wel finde I that Fortune is my fo,
Ne alle the men that ryden conne or go
May of hir cruel wheel the harm with-stonde;
For, as hir list, she pleyeth with free and bonde.'

121. Quod Pandarus, 'than blamestow Fortune
For thou art wrooth, ye, now at erst I see;
Wostow nat wel that Fortune is commune
To every maner wight in som degree?
And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee!
That, as hir joyes moten over-goon,
So mote hir sorwes passen everichoon.

122. For if hir wheel stinte any-thing to torne,
Then cessed she Fortune anoon to be:
Now, sith hir wheel by no wey may sojorne,
What wostow if hir mutabilitee
Right as thy-selven list, wol doon by thee,
Or that she be not fer fro thyn helpinge?
Paraunter, thou hast cause for to singe!

123. And therfor wostow what I thee beseche?
Lat be thy wo and turning to the grounde;
For who-so list have helping of his leche,
To him bihoveth first unwrye his wounde.
To Cerberus in helle ay be I bounde,
Were it for my suster, all thy sorwe,
By my wil, she sholde al be thyn to-morwe.

124. Loke up, I seye, and tel me what she is
Anoon, that I may goon aboute thy nede;
Knowe ich hir ought? for my love, tel me this;
Than wolde I hopen rather for to spede.'
Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,
For he was hit, and wex al reed for shame;
'A ha!' quod Pandare, 'here biginneth game!

125. And with that word he gan him for to shake,
And seyde, 'theef, thou shalt hir name telle.'
But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake
As though men sholde han lad him in-to helle,
And seyde, 'allas! of al my wo the welle,
Than is my swete fo called Criseyde!'
And wel nigh with the word for fere he deyde.

126. And whan that Pandare herde hir name nevene,
Lord, he was glad, and seyde, 'freend so dere,
Now fare a-right, for Joves name in hevene,
Love hath biset thee wel, be of good chere;
For of good name and wysdom and manere
She hath y-nough, and eek of gentilesse;
If she be fayr, thow wost thy-self, I gesse.

127. Ne I never saw a more bountevous
Of hir estat, ne a gladder, ne of speche
A freendlier, ne a more gracious
For to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche
What for to doon; and al this bet to eche,
In honour, to as fer as she may strecche,
A kinges herte semeth by hires a wrecche.

128. And for-thy loke of good comfort thou be;
For certeinly, the firste poynt is this
Of noble corage and wel ordeyné,
A man to have pees with him-self, y-wis;
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
To loven wel, and in a worthy place;
Thee oughte not to clepe it hap, but grace.

129. And also thenk, and ther-with glade thee,
That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
So folweth it that ther is som pitee
Amonges alle thise othere in general;
And for-thy see that thou, in special,
Requere nought that is ayein hir name;
For vertue streccheth not him-self to shame.

130. But wel is me that ever I was born,
That thou biset art in so good a place;
For by my trouthe, in love I dorste have sworn,
Thee sholde never han tid thus fayr a grace;
And wostow why? for thou were wont to chace
At Love in scorn, and for despyt him calle
"Seynt Idiot, lord of thise foles alle."

131. How often hastow maad thy nyce japes,
And seyd, that Loves servants everichone
Of nycetee ben verray goddes apes;
And some wolde monche hir mete alone,
Ligging a-bedde, and make hem for to grone;
And som, thou seydest, hadde a blaunche fevere,
And preydest god he sholde never kevere!

132. And some of hem toke on hem, for the colde,
More than y-nough, so seydestow ful ofte;
And some han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde
How that they wake, whan they slepen softe;
And thus they wolde han brought hem-self a-lofte,
And nathelees were under at the laste;
Thus seydestow, and japedest ful faste.

133. Yet seydestow, that, for the more part,
These loveres wolden speke in general,
And thoughten that it was a siker art,
For fayling, for to assayen over-al.
Now may I jape of thee, if that I shal!
But nathelees, though that I sholde deye,
That thou art noon of tho, that dorste I seye.

134. Now beet thy brest, and sey to god of Love,
"Thy grace, lord! for now I me repente
If I mis spak, for now my-self I love":
Thus sey with al thyn herte in good entente.'
Quod Troilus, 'A! lord! I me consente,
And pray to thee my japes thou foryive,
And I shal never-more whyl I live.'

135. 'Thow seyst wel,' quod Pandare, 'and now I hope
That thou the goddes wratthe hast al apesed ;
And sithen thou hast wepen many a drope,
And seyd swich thing wher-with thy god is plesed,
Now wolde never god but thou were esed ;
And think wel, she of whom rist al thy wo
Here-after may thy comfort been al-so.

136. For thilke ground, that bereth the wedes wikke,
Bereth eek thise holsom herbes, as ful ofte
Next the foule netle, rough and thikke,
The rose waxeth swote and smothe and softe ;
And next the valey is the hil a-lofte ;
And next the derke night the glade morwe ;
And also joye is next the fyn of sorwe.

137. Now loke that atempre be thy brydel,
And, for the beste, ay suffre to the tyde,
Or elles al our labour is on ydel ;
He hasteth wel that wysly can abyde ;
Be diligent, and trewe, and ay wel hyde.
Be lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse,
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyse.

138. But he that parted is in every place
Is no-wher hool, as writen clerkes wyse ;
What wonder is, though swich oon have no grace ?
Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse ?
As plaunte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse,
And on the morwe pulle it up as blyve,
No wonder is, though it may never thryve.

139. And sith that god of Love hath thee bistowed
In place digne un-to thy worthinesse,
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed ;
And of thy-self, for any hevinesse,
Hope alwey wel ; for, but-if drerinesse
Or over-haste our bothe labour shende,
I hope of this to maken a good ende.

140. And wostow why I am the lasse a-fered
Of this matere with my nece trete?
For this have I herd seyd of wyse y-lered,
"Was never man ne woman yet bigete
That was unapt to suffren loves hete
Celestial, or elles love of kinde";
For-thy som grace I hope in hir to finde.

141. And for to speke of hir in special,
Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
It sit hir nought to be celestial
As yet, though that hir liste bothe and couthe;
But trewely, it sete hir wel right nouthe
A worthy knight to loven and cheryce,
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce.

142. Wherfore I am, and wol be, ay redy
To peyne me to do yow this servyse;
For bothe yow to plese thus hope I
Her-afterward; for ye beth bothe wyse,
And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a wyse,
That no man shal the wyser of it be;
And so we may be gladed alle three.

143. And, by my trouthe, I have right now of thee
A good conceyt in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is, I wol now that thou see.
I thenke, sith that love, of his goodnesse,
Hath thee converted out of wikkednesse,
That thou shalt be the beste post, I leve,
Of al his lay, and most his foos to-greve.

144. Ensample why, see now these wyse clerkes,
That erren aldermost a-yein a lawe,
And ben converted from hir wikked werkes
Thorugh grace of god, that list hem to him drawe,
Than arn they folk that han most god in awe,
And strengest-feythed been, I understonde,
And conne an errour alder-best withstonde.'

145. Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To been his help in loving of Criseyde,
Wex of his wo, as who seyth, untormented,
But hotter wex his love, and thus he seyde,
With sobre chere, al-though his herte pleyde,
'Now blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve,
Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

146. But, dere frend, how shal myn wo ben lesse
Til this be doon? and goode, eek tel me this,
How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?
Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, y-wis,
Or nil not here or trowen how it is.
Al this drede I, and eek for the manere
Of thee, hir eem, she nil no swich thing here.'

147. Quod Pandarus, 'thou hast a ful gret care
Lest that the cherl may falle out of the mone!
Why, lord! I hate of thee thy nyce fare!
Why, entremete of that thou hast to done!
For goddes love, I bidde thee a bone,
So lat me alone, and it shal be thy beste.'—
'Why, freend,' quod he, 'now do right as thee leste.

148. But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so greet folye,
That to my lady I desiren sholde
That toucheth harm or any vilenye;
For dredelees, me were lever dye
Than she of me ought elles understode
But that, that mighte sounen in-to gode.'

149. Tho lough this Pandare, and anoon answerde,
'And I thy borw? fy! no wight dooth but so;
I roughte nought though that she stode and herde
How that thou seyst; but fare-wel, I wol go.
A-dieu! be glad! god spede us bothe two!
Yif me this labour and this besinesse,
And of my speed be thyn al that swetnesse.'

150. Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to falle,
And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
And seyde, 'now, fy on the Grekes alle!
Yet, pardee, god shal helpe us at the laste;
And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
And god to-forn, lo, som of hem shall smerte;
And yet me athinketh that this avaunt me asterte!

151. Now, Pandare, I can no more seye,
But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art al!
My lyf, my deeth, hool in thyn honde I leye;
Help now,' quod he. 'Yis, by my trouthe, I shal.'
'God yelde thee, freend, and this in special,'
Quod Troilus, 'that thou me recomaunde
To hir that to the deeth me may comaunde.'

152. This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His fulle freend, than seyde in this manere,
'Far-wel, and thenk I wol thy thank deserve;
Have here my trouthe, and that thou shalt wel here.'—
And wente his wey, thenking on this matere,
And how he best mighte hir beseche of grace,
And finde a tyme ther-to, and a place.

153. For every wight that hath an hous to founde
Ne renneth nought the werk for to biginne
With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde,
And sende his hertes lyne out fro with-inne
Alderfirst his purpos for to winne.
Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
And caste his werk ful wysly, or he wroughte.

154. But Troilus lay tho no lenger doun,
But up anoon up-on his stede bay,
And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun;
Wo was that Greek that with him mette that day.
And in the toun his maner tho forth ay
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That ech him lovede that loked on his face.

155. For he bicom the frendlyeste wight,
The gentileste, and eek the moste free,
The thriftieste and oon the beste knight,
That in his tyme was, or mighte be.
Dede were his japes and his crueltee,
His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge.

156. Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth lyk a man that hurt is sore,
And is somdel of akinge of his wounde
Y-lissed wel, but heled no del more:
And, as an esy pacient, the lore
Abit of him that gooth aboute his cure;
And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

Explicit Liber Primus.

BOOK II

Incipit prohemium Secundi Libri.

1. Out of these blake wawes for to sayle,
O wind, O wind, the weder ginneth clere;
For in this see the boot hath swich travayle,
Of my conning that unnethe I it stere:
This see clepe I the tempestous matere
Of desespeyr that Troilus was inne:
But now of hope the calendes biginne.

2. O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
Thou be my speed fro this forth, and my muse,
To ryme wel this book, til I have do;
Me nedeth here noon other art to use.
For-why to every lovere I me excuse,
That of no sentement I this endyte,
But out of Latin in my tonge it wryte.

3. Wherfore I nil have neither thank ne blame
Of all this werk, but pray yow mekely,
Disblameth me, if any word be lame,
For as myn auctor seyde, so seye I.
Eek though I speke of love unfelingly,
No wonder is, for it no-thing of newe is;
A blind man can nat juggen wel in hewis.

4. Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is chaunge
With-inne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge

Us thinketh hem ; and yet they spake hem so,
And spedde as wel in love as men now do ;
Eek for to winne love in sondry ages,
In sondry londes, sondry been usages.

5. And for-thy if it happe in any wyse,
That here be any lovere in this place
That herkeneth, as the story wol devyse,
How Troilus com to his lady grace,
And thenketh, so nolde I nat love purchace,
Or wondreth on his speche and his doinge,
I noot ; but it is me no wonderinge ;

6. For every wight which that to Rome went,
Halt nat o path, or alwey o manere ;
Eek in som lond were al the gamen shent,
If that they ferde in love as men don here,
As thus, in open doing or in chere,
In visitinge, in forme, or seyde hir sawes ;
For-thy men seyn, ech contree hath his lawes.

7. Eek scarsly been ther in this place three
That han in love seyd lyk and doon in al ;
For to thy purpos this may lyken thee,
And thee right nought, yet al is seyd or shal ;
Eek som men grave in tree, som in stoon wal,
As it bitit ; but sin I have begonne,
Myn auctor shal I folwen, if I conne.

Explicit prohemium Secundi Libri.

Incipit Liber Secundus.

8. In May, that moder is of monthes glade,
That fresshe floures, blewe, and whyte, and rede,
Ben quike agayn, that winter dede made,
And ful of bawme is fletinge every mede ;
Whan Phebus doth his brighte bemes sprede
Right in the whyte Bole, it so bitidde
As I shal singe, on Mayes day the thridde,

9. That Pandarus, for al his wyse speche,
Felte eek his part of loves shottes kene,
That, coude he never so wel of loving preche,
It made his hewe a-day ful ofte grene ;
So shoop it, that him fil that day a tene
In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
And made, er it was day, ful many a wente.

10. The swalwe Proignè, with a sorwful lay,
Whan morwe com, gan make hir weymentinge,
Why she forshapen was ; and ever lay
Pandare a-bedde, half in a slomeringe,
Til she so neigh him made hir chiteringe
How Tereus gan forth hir suster take,
That with the noyse of hir he gan a-wake ;

11. And gan to calle, and dresse him up to ryse,
Remembringe him his erand was to done
From Troilus, and eek his greet empryse ;
And caste and knew in good plyt was the mone
To doon viage, and took his wey ful sone
Un-to his neces paleys ther bi-syde ;
Now Janus, god of entree, thou him gyde !

12. Whan he was come un-to his neces place,
'Wher is my lady?' to hir folk seyde he ;
And they him tolde ; and he forth in gan pace,
And fond, two othere ladyes sete and she
With-inne a paved parlour ; and they three
Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
Of the Sege of Thebes, whyl hem leste.

13. Quod Pandarus, 'ma dame, god yow see,
With al your book and al the companye !'
'Ey, uncle myn, welcome y-wis,' quod she,
And up she roos, and by the hond in hye
She took him faste, and seyde, 'this night thrye,
To goode mote it turne, of yow I mette !'
And with that word she doun on bench him sette.

14. 'Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet,
If god wole, al this yeer,' quod Pandarus;
'But I am sory that I have yow let
To herknen of your book ye preysen thus;
For goddes love, what seith it? tel it us.
Is it of love? O, som good ye me lere!'
'Uncle,' quod she, 'your maistresse is not here!'

15. With that they gonnen laughe, and tho she seyde,
'This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede;
And we han herd how that king Laius deyde
Thurgh Edippus his sone, and al that dede;
And here we stenten at these lettres rede,
How the bisshop, as the book can telle,
Amphiorax, fil thurgh the ground to helle.'

16. Quod Pandarus, 'al this knowe I my-selve,
And al th'assege of Thebes and the care;
For her-of been ther maked bokes twelve:—
But lat be this, and tel me how ye fare;
Do wey your barbe, and shew your face bare;
Do wey your book, rys up, and lat us daunce,
And lat us don to May som observaunce.'

17. 'A! god forbede!' quod she, 'be ye mad?
Is that a widewes lyf, so god you save?
By god, ye maken me right sore a-drad,
Ye ben so wilde, it semeth as ye rave!
It sete me wel bet ay in a cave
To bidde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves:
Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves.'

18. 'As ever thryve I,' quod this Pandarus,
'Yet coude I telle a thing to doon you pleye.'
'Now uncle dere,' quod she, 'tel it us
For goddes love; is than th'assege aweye?
I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye.'
'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'as ever mote I thryve!
It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve.'

19. 'Ye, holy god!' quod she, 'what thing is that?
What? bet than swiche fyve? ey, nay, y-wis!
For al this world ne can I reden what
It sholde been; som jape, I trowe, is this;
And but your-selven telle us what it is,
My wit is for to arede it al to lene;
As help me god, I noot nat what ye mene.'

20. 'And I your borow, ne never shal, for me,
This thing be told to yow, as mote I thryve!'
'And why so, uncle myn? why so?' quod she.
'By god,' quod he, 'that wole I telle as blyve;
For prouder womman were ther noon on-lyve,
And ye it wiste, in al the toun of Troye;
I jape nought, as ever have I joye!'

21. Tho gan she wondren more than biforn
A thousand fold, and doun hir eyen caste;
For never, sith the tyme that she was born,
To knowe thing desired she so faste;
And with a syk she seyde him at the laste,
'Now, uncle myn, I nil yow nought displese,
Nor axen more, that may do yow disese.'

22. So after this, with many wordes glade,
And freendly tales, and with mery chere,
Of this and that they pleyde, and gunnen wade
In many an unkouth glad and deep matere,
As freendes doon, whan they ben met y-fere;
Til she gan axen him how Ector ferde,
That was the tounes wal and Grekes yerde.

23. 'Ful wel, I thanke it god,' quod Pandarus,
'Save in his arm he hath a litel wounde;
And eek his fresshe brother Troilus,
The wyse worthy Ector the secounde,
In whom that every vertu list abounde,
As alle trouthe and alle gentillesse,
Wysdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse.'

24. 'In good feith, eem,' quod she, 'that lyketh me;
They faren wel, god save hem bothe two!
For trewely I holde it greet deyntee
A kinges sone in armes wel to do,
And been of good condiciouns ther-to;
For greet power and moral vertu here
Is selde y-seye in o persone y-fere.'

25. 'In good feith, that is sooth,' quod Pandarus;
'But, by my trouthe, the king hath sones tweye,
That is to mene, Ector and Troilus,
That certainly, though that I sholde deye,
They been as voyde of vyces, dar I seye,
As any men that liveth under the sonne,
Hir might is wyde y-knowe, and what they conne

26. Of Ector nedeth it nought for to telle;
In al this world ther nis a bettre knight
Than he, that is of worthinesse welle;
And he wel more vertu hath than might.
This knoweth many a wys and worthy wight.
The same prys of Troilus I seye,
God help me so, I knowe not swiche tweye.'

27. 'By god,' quod she, 'of Ector that is sooth;
Of Troilus the same thing trowe I;
For dredelees, men tellen that he dooth
In armes day by day so worthily,
And bereth him here at hoom so gentilly
To every wight, that al the prys hath he
Of hem that me were levest preysed be.'

28. 'Ye sey right sooth, y-wis,' quod Pandarus;
'For yesterday, who-so hadde with him been,
He might have wondred up-on Troilus;
For never yet so thikke a swarm of been
Ne fleigh, as Grekes fro him gonne fleen;
And thorugh the feld, in every wightes ere,
Ther nas no cry but "Troilus is there!"

29. Now here, now there, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes blood ; and Troilus,
Now hem he hurte, and hem alle doun he caste ;
Ay where he wente it was arayed thus :
He was hir deeth, and sheld and lyf for us ;
That as that day ther dorste noon withstonde,
Whyl that he held his blody swerd in honde.

30. Therto he is the freendlieste man
Of grete estat, that ever I saw my lyve ;
And wher him list, best felawshipe can
To suche as him thinketh able for to thryve.'
And with that word tho Pandarus, as blyve,
He took his leve, and seyde, 'I wol go henne' :
'Nay, blame have I, myn uncle,' quod she thenne.

31. 'What eyleth yow to be thus wery sone,
And namelich of wommen? wol ye so?
Nay, sitteth down ; by god, I have to done
With yow, to speke of wisdom er ye go.'
And every wight that was a-boute hem tho,
That herde that, gan fer a-wey to stonde,
Whyl they two hadde al that hem liste in honde.

32. Whan that hir tale al brought was to an ende
Of hire estat and of hir governaunce,
Quod Pandarus, 'now is it tyme I wende ;
But yet, I seye, aryseth, lat us daunce,
And cast your widwes habit to mischaunce :
What list yow thus your-self to disfigure,
Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure?'

33. 'A ! wel bithought ! for love of god,' quod she,
'Shal I not witen what ye mene of this?'
'No, this thing axeth layser,' tho quod he,
'And eek me wolde muche greve, y-wis,
If I it tolde, and ye it toke amis.
Yet were it bet my tonge for to stille
Than seye a sooth that were ayeins your wille.

34. For, nece, by the goddesse Minerve,
And Juppiter, that maketh the thonder ringe,
And by the blisful Venus that I serve,
Ye been the womman in this world livinge,
With-oute paramours, to my witinge,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye witen wel your-self, I leve.'

35. 'Y-wis, myn uncle,' quod she, 'grant mercy;
Your freendship have I founden ever yit;
I am to no man holden trewely
So muche as yow, and have so litel quit;
And, with the grace of god, emforth my wit,
As in my gilt I shal you never offende;
And if I have er this, I wol amende.

36. But, for the love of god, I yow beseche,
As ye ben he that I most love and triste,
Lat be to me your fremde maner speche,
And sey to me, your nece, what yow liste':
And with that word hir uncle anoon hir kiste,
And seyde, 'gladly, leve nece dere,
Tak it for good that I shal seye yow here.'

37. With that she gan hir eyen doun to caste,
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lyte,
And seyde, 'nece, alwey, lo! to the laste,
How-so it be that som men hem delyte
With subtil art hir tales for to endyte,
Yet for al that, in hir entencioun,
Hir tale is al for som conclusioun.

38. And sithen th'ende is every tales strengthe,
And this matere is so bihovely,
What sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe
To yow, that been my freend so feithfully?'
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Biholden hir, and loken on hir face,
And seyde, 'on suche a mirour goode grace!'

39. Than thoughte he thus, 'if I my tale endyte
Ought hard, or make a proces any whyle,
She shal no savour han ther-in but lyte,
And trowe I wolde hir in my will bigyle.
For tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
Ther-as they can nat pleynly understonde;
For-thy hir wit to serven wol I fonde'—

40. And loked on hir in a besy wyse,
And she was war that he byheld hir so,
And seyde, 'lord! so faste ye me avyse!
Sey ye me never er now? what sey ye, no?'
'Yes, yes,' quod he, 'and bet wole er I go;
But, by my trouthe, I thoughte now if ye
Be fortunat, for now men shal it see.

41. For to every wight som goodly aventure
Som tyme is shape, if he it can receyven;
And if that he wol take of it no cure,
Whan that it cometh, but wilfully it weyven,
Lo, neither cas nor fortune him deceyven,
But right his verray slouthe and wrecchednesse;
And swich a wight is for to blame, I gesse.

42. Good aventure, O bele nece, have ye
Ful lightly founden, and ye conne it take;
And, for the love of god, and eek of me,
Cacche it anoon, lest aventure slake.
What sholde I lenger proces of it make?
Yif me your hond, for in this world is noon,
If that you list, a wight so wel begoon.

43. And sith I speke of good entencioun,
As I to yow have told wel here-biforn,
And love as wel your honour and renoun
As creature in al this world y-born;
By alle the othes that I have yow sworn,
And ye be wrooth therfore, or wene I lye,
Ne shal I never seen yow eft with yë.

44. Beth nought agast, ne quaketh nat; wher-to?
Ne chaungeth nat for fere so your hewe;
For hardely, the werste of this is do;
And though my tale as now be to yow newe,
Yet trist alwey, ye shal me finde trewe;
And were it thing that me thoughte unsittinge,
To yow nolde I no swiche tales bringe.'

45. 'Now, my good eem, for goddes love, I preye,'
Quod she, 'com of, and tell me what it is;
For bothe I am agast what ye wol seye,
And eek me longeth it to wite, y-wis,
For whether it be wel or be amis,
Sey on, lat me not in this fere dwelle:'
'So wol I doon, now herkneth, I shal telle:

46. Now, nece myn, the kinges dere sone,
The goode, wyse, worthy, fresshe, and free,
Which alwey for to do wel is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loveth thee,
That, bot ye helpe, it wol his bane be.
Lo, here is al, what sholde I more seye?
Doth what yow list, to make him live or deye.

47. But if ye lete him deye, I wol sterve;
Have her my trouthe, nece, I nil not lyen;
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve'—
With that the teres braste out of his yën,
And seyde, 'if that ye doon us bothe dyen,
Thus giltelees, than have ye fisshed faire;
What mende ye, though that we bothe apeyre?

48. Allas! he which that is my lord so dere,
That trewe man, that noble gentil knight,
That nought desireth but your freendly chere,
I see him deye, ther he goth up-right,
And hasteth him, with al his fulle might,
For to be slayn, if fortune wol assente;
Allas! that god yow swich a beautee sente!

49. If it be so that ye so cruel be,
That of his deeth yow liste nought to recche,
That is so trewe and worthy, as ye see,
No more than of a japere or a wrecche,
If ye be swich, your beautee may not strecche
To make amendes of so cruel a dede ;
Avysement is good bifore the nede.

50. Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees !
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no bote !
Wo worth that beautee that is routhelees !
Wo worth that wight that tret ech under fote !
And ye, that been of beautee crop and rote,
If therwith-al in you ther be no routhe,
Than is it harm ye liven, by my trouthe !

51. And also thenk wel, that this is no gaude ;
For me were lever, thou and I and he
Were hanged, than I sholde been his baude,
As heye, as men mighte on us alle y-see :
I am thyn eem, the shame were to me,
As well as thee, if that I sholde assente,
Thorugh myn abet, that he thyn honour shente.

52. Now understond, for I yow nought requere
To binde yow to him thorugh no beheste,
But only that ye make him bettre chere
Than ye han doon er this, and more feste,
So that his lyf be saved, at the leste :
This al and som, and playnly our entente ;
God helpe me so, I never other mente.

53. Lo, this request is not but skile, y-wis,
Ne doute of reson, pardee, is ther noon.
I sette the worste that ye dredden this,
Men wolden wondren seen him come or goon :
Ther-ayeins answere I thus a-noon,
That every wight, but he be fool of kinde,
Wol deme it love of freendship in his minde.

54. What? who wol deme, though he see a man
To temple go, that he the images eteth?
Thenk eek how wel and wysly that he can
Governe him-self, that he no-thing foryeteth,
That, wher he cometh, he prys and thank him geteth;
And eek ther-to, he shal come here so selde,
What fors were it though al the toun behelde?

55. Swich love of freendes regneth al this toun;
And wrye yow in that mantel ever-mo;
And, god so wis be my savacioun,
As I have seyd, your beste is to do so.
But alwey, goode nece, to stinte his wo,
So lat your daunger sucred ben a lyte,
That of his deeth ye be nought for to wyte.'

56. Criseyde, which that herde him in this wyse,
Thoughte, 'I shal fele what he meneth, y-wis.'
'Now, eem,' quod she, 'what wolde ye devyse,
What is your reed I sholde doon of this?'
'That is wel seyd,' quod he, 'certayn, best is
That ye him love ayein for his lovinge,
As love for love is skilful guerdoninge.

57. Thenk eek, how elde wasteth every houre
In eche of yow a party of beautee;
And therfore, er that age thee devoure,
Go love, for, olde, ther wol no wight of thee.
Lat this proverbe a lore un-to yow be;
"To late y-war, quod Beautee, whan it paste;"
And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.

58. The kinges fool is woned to cryen loude,
Whan that him thinketh a womman bereth hir hyë,
"So longe mote ye live, and alle proude,
Til crowes feet be growe under your yë,
And sende yow thanne a mirour in to pryë
In whiche ye may see your face a-morwe!"
Nece, I bid wisshe yow no more sorwe.'

59. With this he stente, and caste adoun the heed,
And she bigan to breste a-wepe anoon.
And seyde, 'allas, for wo! why nere I deed?
For of this world the feith is al agoon!
Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,
When he, that for my beste freend I wende,
Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?

60. Allas! I wolde han trusted, doutelees,
That if that I, thurgh my disaventure,
Had loved other him or Achilles,
Ector, or any mannes creature,
Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in repreve;
This false world, allas! who may it leve?

61. What? is this al the joye and al the feste?
Is this your reed, is this my blisful cas?
Is this the verray mede of your beheste?
Is al this peynted proces seyd, allas!
Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas!
Thou in this dredful cas for me purveye;
For so astonied am I that I deye!'

62. With that she gan ful sorwfully to syke;
'A! may it be no bet?' quod Pandarus;
'By god, I shal no-more come here this wyke,
And god to-forn, that am mistrusted thus;
I see ful wel that ye sette lyte of us,
Or of our deeth! Allas! I woful wrecche!
Mighte he yet live, of me is nought to recche.

63. O cruel god, O dispitouse Marte,
O Furies three of helle, on yow I crye!
So lat me never out of this hous departe,
If that I mente harm or vilanye!
But sith I see my lord mot nedes dye,
And I with him, here I me shryve, and seye
That wikkedly ye doon us bothe deye.

64. But sith it lyketh yow that I be deed,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shal I never eten breed
Til I myn owene herte blood may see;
For certayn, I wole deye as soon as he'—
And up he sterte, and on his wey he raughte,
Til she agayn him by the lappe caughte.

65. Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for fere,
So as she was the ferfulleste wight
That mighte be, and herde eek with hir ere,
And saw the sorwful ernest of the knight,
And in his preyere eek saw noon unright,
And for the harm that mighte eek fallen more,
She gan to rewe, and dradde hir wonder sore;

66. And thoughte thus, 'unhappes fallen thikke
Alday for love, and in swich manner cas,
As men ben cruel in hem-self and wikke;
And if this man slee here him-self, allas!
In my presence, it wol be no solas.
What men wolde of hit deme I can nat seye;
It nedeth me ful sleyly for to pleye.'

67. And with a sorwful syk she seyde thrye,
'A! lord! what me is tid a sory chaunce!
For myn estat now lyth in jupartye,
And eek myn emes lyf lyth in balaunce;
But nathelees, with goddes governaunce,
I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe,
And eek his lyf'; and stinte for to wepe.

68. 'Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese;
Yet have I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese;
Ye seyn, ye no-thing elles me requere?'
'No, wis,' quod he, 'myn owene nece dere.'
'Now wel,' quod she, 'and I wol doon my peyne;
I shal myn herte ayeins my lust constreyne,

69. But that I nil not holden him in honde,
Ne love a man, ne can I not, ne may
Ayeins my wil; but elles wol I fonde,
Myn honour sauf, plese him fro day to day;
Ther-to nolde I nought ones have seyd nay,
But that I dredde, as in my fantasye;
But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladye.

70. And here I make a protestacioun,
That in this proces if ye depper go,
That certaynly, for no savacioun
Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I never on him han other routhe.'—
'I graunte wel,' quod Pandare, 'by my trouthe.

71. But may I truste wel ther-to,' quod he,
'That, of this thing that ye han hight me here,
Ye wol it holden trewly un-to me?'
'Ye, doutelees,' quod she, 'myn uncle dere.'
'Ne that I shal han cause in this matere,'
Quod he, 'to pleyne, or after yow to preche?'
'Why, no, pardee; what nedeth more speche?'

72. Tho fillen they in othere tales glade,
Til at the laste, 'O good eem,' quod she tho,
'For love of god, which that us bothe made,
Tel me how first ye wisten of his wo:
Wot noon of hit but ye?' He seyde, 'no.'
'Can he wel speke of love?' quod she, 'I preye,
Tel me, for I the bet me shal purveye.'

73. Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle,
And seyde, 'by my trouthe, I shal yow telle.
This other day, nought gon ful longe whyle,
In-with the paleys-gardyn, by a welle,
Gan he and I wel half a day to dwelle,
Right for to speken of an ordenaunce,
How we the Grekes mighte disavaunce.

74. Sone after that bigonne we to lepe,
And casten with our dartes to and fro,
Til at the laste he seyde, he wolde slepe,
And on the gres a-doun he leyde him tho;
And I after gan rome to and fro
Til that I herde, as that I welk allone,
How he bigan ful wofully to grone.

75. Tho gan I stalke him softely bihinde,
And sikerly, the sothe for to seyne,
As I can clepe ayein now to my minde,
Right thus to Love he gan him for to pleyne;
He seyde, "lord! have routhe up-on my peyne,
Al have I been rebel in myn entente;
Now, *mea culpa*, lord! I me repente.

76. O god, that at thy disposicioun
Ledest the fyn, by juste purveyaunce,
Of every wight, my lowe confessioun
Accepte in gree, and send me swich penaunce
As lyketh thee, but from desesperaunce,
That may my goost departe awey fro thee,
Thou be my sheld, for thy benignitee.

77. For certes, lord, so sore hath she me wounded
That stod in blak, with loking of hir yën,
That to myn hertes botme it is y-sounded,
Thorugh which I woot that I mot nedes dyen;
This is the worste, I dar me not bi-wryen;
And wel the hotter been the gledes rede,
That men hem wryen with asshen pale and dede."

78. With that he smoot his heed adoun anoon,
And gan to motre, I noot what, trewely.
And I with that gan stille awey to goon,
And leet ther-of as no-thing wist hadde I,
And come ayein anoon and stood him by,
And seyde, "a-wake, ye slepen al to longe;
It semeth nat that love dooth yow longe,

79. That slepen so that no man may yow wake.
Who sey ever or this so dull a man?"
"Ye, freend," quod he, "do ye your hedes ake
For love, and lat me liven as I can."
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,
Yet made he tho as fresh a contenaunce
As though he shulde have led the newe daunce.

80. This passed forth, till now, this other day,
It fel that I com roming al allone
Into his chaumbre, and fond how that he lay
Up-on his bed; but man so sore grone
Ne herde I never, and what that was his mone,
Ne wiste I nought; for, as I was cominge,
Al sodeynly he lefte his compleyninge.

81. Of which I took somwhat suspecioun,
And neer I com, and fond he wepte sore;
And god so wis be my savacioun,
As never of thing hadde I no routhe more.
For neither with engyn, ne with no lore,
Unethes mighte I fro the deeth him kepe;
That yet fele I myn herte for him wepe.

82. And god wot, never, sith that I was born,
Was I so bisy no man for to preche,
Ne never was to wight so depe y-sworn,
Or he me tolde who mighte been his leche.
But now to yow rehersen al his speche,
Or alle his woful wordes for to soune,
Ne bid me not, but ye wol see me swowne.

83. But for to save his lyf, and elles nought,
And to non harm of yow, thus am I driven;
And for the love of god that us hath wrought,
Swich chere him dooth, that he and I may liven.
Now have I plat to yow myn herte schriven;
And sin ye woot that myn entente is clene,
Tak hede ther-of, for I non yvel mene.

84. And right good thrift, I pray to god, have ye,
That han swich oon y-caught with-oute net;
And be ye wys, as ye ben fair to see,
Wel in the ring than is the ruby set.
Ther were never two so well y-met,
Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre:
Ther mighty god yet graunte us see that houre!'

85. 'Nay, therof spak I not, a, ha!' quod she,
'As helpe me god, ye shenden every deel!'
'O mercy, dere nece,' anoon quod he,
'What-so I spak, I mente nought but weel,
By Mars the god, that helmed is of steel:
Now beth nought wrooth, my blood, my nece dere.'
'Now wel,' quod she, 'foryeven be it here!'

86. With this he took his leve, and hoom he wente;
And lord, how he was glad and wel bigoon!
Criseyde aroos, no lenger she ne stente,
But straught in-to hir closet wente anoon,
And sette here doun as stille as any stoon,
And every word gan up and doun to winde,
That he hadde seyd, as it com hir to minde;

87. And wex somdel astonied in hir thought,
Right for the newe cas; but whan that she
Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought
Of peril, why she oughte afered be.
For man may love, of possibilitee,
A womman so, his herte may to-breste,
And she nought love ayein, but-if hir leste.

88. But as she sat allone and thoughte thus,
Th'ascry aroos at skarmish al with-oute,
And men cryde in the strete, 'see, Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes route!'
With that gan al hir meynee for to shoute,
'A! go we see, caste up the latis wyde;
For thurgh this strete he moot to palays ryde;

89. For other wey is fro the yate noon
Of Dardanus, ther open is the cheyne.'
With that com he and all his folk anoon
An esy pas rydinge, in routes tweyne,
Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne,
For which, men say, may nought disturbed be
That shal bityden of necessitee.

90. This Troilus sat on his baye stede,
Al armed, save his heed, ful richely,
And wounded was his hors, and gan to blede,
On whiche he rood a pas, ful softely ;
But swich a knightly sighte, trewely,
As was on him, was nought, with-outen faile,
To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle.

91. So lyk a man of armes and a knight
He was to seen, fulfild of heigh prowesse ;
For bothe he hadde a body and a might
To doon that thing, as wel as hardinesse ;
And eek to seen him in his gere him dresse,
So fresh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
It was an heven up-on him for to see.

92. His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tissew heng, his bak bihinde,
His sheld to-dasshed was with swerdes and maces,
In which men mighte many an arwe finde
That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rinde ;
And ay the peple cryde, 'here cometh our joye,
And, next his brother, holdere up of Troye !'

93. For which he wex a litel reed for shame,
Whan he the peple up-on him herde cryen,
That to biholde it was a noble game,
How sobreliche he caste doun his yën.
Cryseyda gan al his chere aspyen,
And leet so softe it in hir herte sinke,
That to hir-self she seyde, 'who yaf me drinke?'

94. For of hir owene thought she wex al reed,
Remembringe hir right thus, 'lo, this is he
Which that myn uncle swereth he moot be deed,
But I on him have mercy and pitee';
And with that thought, for pure a-shamed, she
Gan in hir heed to pulle, and that as faste,
Whyl he and al the peple for-by paste,

95. And gan to caste and rollen up and doun
With-inne hir thought his excellent prowesse,
And his estat, and also his renoun,
His wit, his shap, and eek his gentilesse;
But most hir favour was, for his distresse
Was al for hir, and thoughte it was a routhe
To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.

96. Now mighte som envyous jangle thus,
'This was a sodeyn love, how mighte it be
That she so lightly lovede Troilus
Right for the firste sighte; ye, pardee?'
Now who-so seyth so, mote he never thee!
For every thing, a ginning hath it nede
Er al be wrought, with-outen any drede.

97. For I sey nought that she so sodeynly
Yaf him hir love, but that she gan enclyne
To lyke him first, and I have told yow why;
And after that, his manhod and his pyne
Made love with-inne hir for to myne,
For which, by proces and by good servyse,
He gat hir love, and in no sodeyn wyse.

98. And also blisful Venus, wel arayed,
Sat in hir seventhe hous of hevene tho,
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,
To helpen sely Troilus of his wo.
And, sooth to seyn, she nas nat al a fo
To Troilus in his nativitee;
God woot that wel the soner spedde he.

99. Now lat us stinte of Troilus a throwe,
That rydeth forth, and lat us tourne faste
Un-to Criseyde, that heng hir heed ful lowe,
Ther-as she sat allone, and gan to caste
Wher-on she wolde apoynte hir at the laste,
If it so were hir eem ne wolde cesse,
For Troilus, up-on hir for to presse.

100. And, lord! so she gan in hir thought argue
In this matere of which I have yow told,
And what to doon best were, and what eschue,
That plyted she ful ofte in many fold.
Now was hir herte warm, now was it cold,
And what she thoughte somwhat shal I wryte,
As to myn auctor listeth for to endyte.

101. She thoughte wel, that Troilus persone
She knew by sighte and eek his gentillesse,
And thus she seyde, 'al were it nought to done,
To graunte him love, yet, for his worthinesse,
It were honour, with pley and with gladnesse,
In honestee, with swich a lord to dele,
For myn estat, and also for his hele.

102. Eek, wel wot I my kinges sone is he;
And sith he hath to see me swich delyt,
If I wolde utterly his sighte flee,
Paraunter he mighte have me in dispyt,
Thurgh which I mighte stonde in worse plyt;
Now were I wys, me hate to purchace,
With-outen nede, ther I may stonde in grace?

103. In every thing, I woot, ther lyth mesure.
For though a man forbede dronkenesse,
He nought for-bet that every creature
Be drinkelees for alwey, as I gesse;
Eek sith I woot for me is his distresse,
I ne oughte not for that thing him despyse,
Sith it is so, he meneth in good wyse.

104. And eek I knowe, of longe tyme agoon,
His thewes goode, and that he is not nyce.
Ne avauntour, seyth men, certein, is he noon;
To wys is he to do so gret a vyce;
Ne als I nel him never so cheryce,
That he may make avaunt, by juste cause;
He shal me never binde in swiche a clause.

105. Now set a cas, the hardest is, y-wis,
Men mighten deme that he loveth me:
What dishonour were it un-to me, this?
May I him lette of that? why nay, pardee!
I knowe also, and alday here and see,
Men loven wommen al this toun aboute;
Be they the wers? why, nay, with-outen doute.

106. I thenk eek how he able is for to have
Of al this noble toun the thriftieste,
To been his love, so she hir honour save;
For out and out he is the worthieste,
Save only Ector, which that is the beste.
And yet his lyf al lyth now in my cure,
But swich is love, and eek myn aventure.

107. Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought;
For wel wot I my-self, so god me spede,
Al wolde I that noon wistë of this thought,
I am oon the fayreste, out of drede,
And goodlieste, who-so taketh hede;
And so men seyn in al the toun of Troye.
What wonder is it though he of me have joye?

108. I am myn owene woman, wel at ese,
I thanke it god, as after myn estat;
Right yong, and stonde unteyd in lusty lese,
With-outen jalousye or swich debat;
Shal noon housbonde seyn to me "chekmat!"
For either they ben ful of jalousye,
Or maisterful, or loven novelrye.

109. What shall I doon? to what fyn live I thus?
Shal I nat loven, in cas if that me leste?
What, *par dieux!* I am nought religious!
And though that I myn herte sette at reste
Upon this knight, that is the worthieste,
And kepe alwey myn honour and my name,
By alle right, it may do me no shame.'

110. But right as whan the sonne shyneth brighte,
In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flighte
Which over-sprat the sonne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorugh hir soule pace,
That over-spradde hir brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for fere almost she gan to falle.

111. That thought was this, 'allas! sin I am free,
Sholde I now love, and putte in jupartye
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?
Allas! how dorste I thenken that folye?
May I nought well in other folk aspye
Hir dredful joye, hir constreynt, and hir peyne?
Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne.

112. For love is yet the moste stormy lyf,
Right of him-self, that ever was bigonne;
For ever som mistrust, or nyce stryf,
Ther is in love, som cloud is over the sonne:
Ther-to we wrecched wommen no-thing conne,
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Our wreche is this, our owene wo to drinke.

113. Also these wikked tonges been so prest
To speke us harm, eek men be so untrewe,
That, right anoon as cessed is hir lest,
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe:
But harm y-doon, is doon, who-so it rewe.
For though these men for love hem first to-rende,
Ful sharp biginning breketh ofte at ende.

114. How ofte tyme hath it y-knowen be,
The treson, that to womman hath be do?
To what fyn is swich love, I can nat see,
Or wher bicomth it, whan it is ago;
Ther is no wight that woot, I trowe so,
Wher it bycomth; lo, no wight on it sporneth;
That erst was no-thing, in-to nought it torneth.

115. How bisy, if I love, eek moste I be
To plesen hem that jangle of love, and demen,
And coye hem, that they sey non harm of me?
For though ther be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harm that folk hir freendes quemen;
And who may stoppen every wikked tonge,
Or soun of belles whyl that they be ronge?'

116. And after that, hir thought bigan to clere,
And seyde, 'he which that no-thing under-taketh,
No-thing ne acheveth, be him looth or dere.'
And with an other thought hir herte quaketh;
Than slepeth hope, and after dreed awaketh;
Now hoot, now cold; but thus, bi-twixen tweye,
She rist hir up, and went hir for to pleye.

117. Adoun the steyre anoon-right tho she wente
In-to the gardin, with hir neces three,
And up and doun ther made many a wente,
Flexippe, she, Tharbe, and Antigone,
To pleyen, that it joye was to see;
And othere of hir wommen, a gret route
Hir folwede in the gardin al aboute.

118. This yerd was large, and rayled alle the aleyes,
And shadwed wel with blosmy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded alle the weyes,
In which she walketh arm in arm bitwene;
Til at the laste Antigone the shene
Gan on a Trojan song to singe clere,
That it an heven was hir voys to here.—

119. She seyde, 'O Love, to whom I have and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
As I best can, to yow, lord, yeve ich al
For ever-more, myn hertes lust to rente.
For never yet thy grace no wight sente
So blisful cause as me, my lyf to lede
In alle joye and seurtee, out of drede.

120. Ye, blisful god, han me so wel beset
In love, y-wis, that al that bereth lyf
Imaginen ne cowde how to ben bet;
For, lord, with-outen jalousye or stryf,
I love oon which that is most ententyf
To serven wel, unwery or unfeyned,
That ever was, and leest with harm distreyned.

121. As he that is the welle of worthinesse,
Of trouthe ground, mirour of goodliheed,
Of wit Appollo, stoon of sikernesse,
Of vertu rote, of lust findere and heed,
Thurgh which is alle sorwe fro me deed,
Y-wis, I love him best, so doth he me;
Now good thrift have he, wher-so that he be!

122. Whom sholde I thanke but yow, god of Love,
Of al this blisse, in which to bathe I ginne?
And thanked be ye, lord, for that I love!
This is the righte lyf that I am inne,
To flemen alle manere vyce and sinne:
This doth me so to vertu for to entende,
That day by day I in my wil amende.

123. And who-so seyth that for to love is vyce,
Or thraldom, though he fele in it distresse,
He outher is envyous, or right nyce,
Or is unmighty, for his shrewednesse,
To loven; for swich maner folk, I gesse,
Defamen Love, as no-thing of him knowe;
They speken, but they bente never his bowe.

124. What is the sonne wers, of kinde righte,
Though that a man, for feblesse of his yën,
May nought endure on it to see for brighte?
Or love the wers, though wrecches on it cryen?
No wele is worth, that may no sorwe dryen.
And for-thy, who that hath an heed of verre,
Fro cast of stones war him in the werre!

125. But I with al myn herte and al my might,
As I have seyd, wol love, un-to my laste,
My dere herte, and al myn owene knight,
In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal ever laste.
Al dredde I first to love him to biginne,
Now woot I wel, ther is no peril inne.'

126. And of hir song right with that word she stente,
And therwith-al, 'now, nece,' quod Criseyde,
'Who made this song with so good entente?'
Antigone answerde anoon, and seyde,
'Ma dame, y-wis, the goodlieste mayde
Of greet estat in al the toun of Troye;
And let hir lyf in most honour and joye.'

127. 'Forsothe, so it semeth by hir song,'
Quod tho Criseyde, and gan ther-with to syke,
And seyde, 'lord, is there swich blisse among
These lovers, as they conne faire endyte?'
'Ye, wis,' quod fresh Antigone the whyte,
'For alle the folk that han or been on lyve
Ne conne wel the blisse of love discryve.

128. But wene ye that every wrecche woot
The parfit blisse of love? why, nay, y-wis;
They wenen al be love, if oon be hoot;
Do wey, do wey, they woot no-thing of this!
Men mosten axe at seyntes if it is
Aught fair in hevene; why? for they conne telle;
And axen fendes, is it foul in helle.'

129. Criseyde un-to that purpos nought answerde,
But seyde, 'y-wis, it wol be night as faste.'
But every word which that she of hir herde,
She gan to prenten in hir herte faste;
And ay gan love hir lasse for to agaste
Than it dide erst, and sinken in hir herte,
That she wex somwhat able to converte.

130. The dayes honour, and the hevenes yë,
The nightes fo, al this clepe I the sonne,
Gan westren faste, and dounward for to wrye,
As he that hadde his dayes cours y-ronne;
And whyte thinges wexen dimme and donne
For lak of light, and sterres for to appere,
That she and al hir folk in wente y-fere.

131. So whan it lyked hir to goon to reste,
And voyded weren they that voyden oughte,
She seyde, that to slepe wel hir leste.
Hir wommen sone til hir bed hir broughte.
Whan al was hust, than lay she stille, and thoughte
Of al this thing the manere and the wyse.
Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wyse.

132. A nightingale, upon a cedre grene,
Under the chambre-wal ther as she lay,
Ful loude sang ayein the mone shene,
Paraunter, in his briddes wyse, a lay
Of love, that made hir herte fresh and gay.
That herkned she so longe in good entente,
Til at the laste the dede sleep hir hente.

133. And, as she sleep, anoon-right tho hir mette,
How that an egle, fethered whyt as boon,
Under hir brest his longe clawes sette,
And out hir herte he rente, and that a-noon,
And dide his herte in-to hir brest to goon,
Of which she nought agroos ne no-thing smerte,
And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.

134. Now lat hir slepe, and we our tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleys riden,
Fro the scarmuch, of the whiche I tolde,
And in his chambre sit, and hath abiden
Till two or three of his messages yeden
For Pandarus, and soughten him ful faste,
Til they him founde, and broughte him at the laste.

135. This Pandarus com leping in at ones
And seide thus, 'who hath ben wel y-bete
To-day with swerdes, and with slinge-stones,
But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?'
And gan to jape, and seyde, 'lord, so ye swete!
But rys, and lat us soupe and go to reste';
And he answerde him, 'do we as thee leste.'

136. With al the haste goodly that they mighte,
They spedde hem fro the souper un-to bedde;
And every wight out at the dore him dighte,
And wher him list upon his wey he spedde;
But Troilus, that thoughte his herte bledde
For wo, til that he herde som tydinge,
He seyde, 'freend, shal I now wepe or singe?'

137. Quod Pandarus, 'ly stille, and lat me slepe,
And don thyn hood, thy nedes spedde be;
And chese, if thou wolt singe or daunce or lepe;
At shorte wordes, thow shalt trowe me.—
Sire, my nece wol do wel by thee,
And love thee best, by god and by my trouthe,
But lak of pursuit make it in thy slouthe.

138. For thus ferforth I have thy work bigonne,
Fro day to day, til this day, by the morwe,
Hir love of freendship have I to thee wonne,
And also hath she leyd hir feyth to borwe.
Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorwe.'
What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?
As ye han herd bifore, al he him tolde.

139. But right as floures, thorugh the colde of nighte
Y-closed, stoupen on hir stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem a-yein the sonne bright,
And spreden on hir kinde cours by rowe;
Right so gan tho his eyen up to throwe
This Troilus, and seyde, 'O Venus dere,
Thy might, thy grace, y-heried be it here!'

140. And to Pandare he held up bothe his hondes,
And seyde, 'lord, al thyn be that I have;
For I am hool, al brosten been my bondes;
A thousand Troians who so that me yave,
Eche after other, god so wis me save,
Ne mighte me so gladen; lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for joye, it wol to-sterte!

141. But lord, how shal I doon, how shal I liven?
Whan shal I next my dere herte see?
How shal this longe tyme a-wey be driven,
Til that thou be ayein at hir fro me?
Thou mayst answere, "a-byd, a-byd," but he
That hangeth by the nekke, sooth to seyne,
In grete disese abydeth for the peyne.'

142. 'Al esily, now, for the love of Marte,'
Quod Pandarus, 'for every thing hath tyme;
So longe abyd til that the night departe;
For al so siker as thow lyst here by me,
And god toforn, I wol be there at pryme,
And for thy werk somwhat as I shal seye,
Or on som other wight this charge leye.

143. For pardee, god wot, I have ever yit
Ben redy thee to serve, and to this night
Have I nought fayned, but emforth my wit
Don al thy lust, and shal with al my might.
Do now as I shal seye, and fare a-right;
And if thou nilt, wyte al thy-self thy care,
On me is nought along thyn yvel fare.

144. I woot wel that thow wyser art than I
A thousand fold, but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I wolde outrely,
Right of myn owene hond, wryte hir right now
A lettre, in which I wolde hir tellen how
I ferde amis, and hir beseche of routhe ;
Now help thy-self, and leve it not for slouthe.

145. And I my-self shal ther-with to hir goon ;
And whan thou wost that I am with hir there,
Worth thou up-on a courser right anoon,
Ye, hardily, right in thy beste gere,
And ryd forth by the place, as nought ne were,
And thou shalt finde us, if I may, sittinge
At som windowe, in-to the strete lokinge.

146. And if thee list, than maystow us saluwe,
And up-on me makë thy contenaunce ;
But, by thy lyf, be war and faste eschuwe
To tarien ought, god shilde us fro mischaunce !
Ryd forth thy wey, and hold thy governaunce ;
And we shal speke of thee som-what, I trowe,
Whan thou art goon, to do thyne eres glowe !

147. Touching thy lettre, thou art wys y-nough,
I woot thow nilt it digneliche endyte ;
As make it with thise argumentes tough ;
Ne scrivenish or craftily thou it wryte ;
Beblotte it with thy teres eek a lyte ;
And if thou wryte a goodly word al softe,
Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte.

148. For though the beste harpour upon lyve
Wolde on the beste souned joly harpe
That ever was, with alle his fingres fyve,
Touche ay o streng, or ay o werbul harpe,
Were his nayles poynted never so sharpe,
It shulde maken every wight to dulle,
To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle.

149. Ne jompre eek no discordaunt thing y-fere,
As thus, to usen termes of phisyk;
In loves termes, hold of thy matere
The forme alwey, and do that it be lyk;
For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
With asses feet, and hede it as an ape,
It cordeth nought; so nere it but a jape.'

150. This counseyl lyked wel to Troilus;
But as a dreedful lover, he seyde this:—
'Allas, my dere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to wryte, y-wis,
Lest of myn innocence I seyde a-mis,
Or that she nolde it for despyt receyve;
Thanne were I deed, ther mighte it nothing weyve.'

151. To that Pandare answerde, 'if thee lest,
Do that I seye, and lat me therwith goon;
For by that lord that formed est and west,
I hope of it to bringe answere anoon
Right of hir hond, and if that thou nilt noon,
Lat be; and sory mote he been his lyve,
Ayeins thy lust that helpeth thee to thryve.

152. Quod Troilus, '*Depardieux*, I assente;
Sin that thee list, I will aryse and wryte;
And blisful god preye ich, with good entente,
The vyage, and the lettre I shal endyte,
So spede it; and thou, Minerva, the whyte,
Yif thou me wit my lettre to devyse:'
And sette him doun, and wroot right in this wyse.—

153. First he gan hir his righte lady calle,
His hertes lyf, his lust, his sorwes leche,
His blisse, and eek this othere termes alle,
That in swich cas these loveres alle seche;
And in ful humble wyse, as in his speche,
He gan him recomaunde un-to hir grace;
To telle al how, it axeth muchel space.

154. And after this, ful lowly he hir prayde
To be nought wrooth, though he, of his folye,
So hardy was to hir to wryte, and seyde,
That love it made, or elles moste he dye,
And pitously gan mercy for to crye ;
And after that he seyde, and ley ful loude,
Him-self was litel worth, and lesse he coude ;

155. And that she sholde han his conning excused,
That litel was, and eek he dredde hir so,
And his unworthinesse he ay acused ;
And after that, than gan he telle his wo ;
But that was endeles, with-outen ho
And seyde, he wolde in trouthe alwey him holde ;—
And radde it over, and gan the lettre folde.

156. And with his salte teres gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wex deliverliche and rathe ;
Ther-with a thousand tymes, er he lette,
He kiste tho the lettre that he shette,
And seyde, 'lettre, a blisful destenee
Thee shapen is, my lady shal thee see.'

157. This Pandare took the lettre, and that by tyme
A-morwe, and to his neces paleys sterte,
And faste he swoor, that it was passed pryme,
And gan to jape, and seyde, 'y-wis, myn herte,
So fresh it is, al-though it sore smerte,
I may not slepe never a Mayes morwe ;
I have a joly wo, a lusty sorwe.'

158. Criseyde, whan that she hir uncle herde,
With dreedful herte, and desirous to here
The cause of his cominge, thus answerde,
'Now by your feyth, myn uncle,' quod she, 'dere,
What maner windes gydeth yow now here?
Tel us your joly wo and your penaunce,
How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce.'

159. 'By god,' quod he, 'I hoppe alwey bihinde!'
And she to-laugh, it thoughte hir herte breste.
Quod Pandarus, 'loke alwey that ye finde
Game in myn hood, but herkneth, if yow leste;
Ther is right now come in-to toune a geste,
A Greek espye, and telleth newe thinges,
For which come I to telle yow tydinges.

160. Into the gardin go we, and we shal here,
Al prevely, of this a long sermoun.'
With that they wenten arm in arm y-fere
In-to the gardin from the chaumbre doun.
And whan that he so fer was that the soun
Of that he speke, no man here mighte,
He seyde hir thus, and out the lettre plighte,

161. 'Lo, he that is al hoolly youres free
Him recomaundeth lowly to your grace,
And sent to you this lettre here by me;
Avyseth you on it, whan ye han space,
And of som goodly answere yow purchace;
Or, helpe me god, so pleynly for to seyne,
He may not longe liven for his peyne.'

162. Ful dredfully tho gan she stonde stille,
And took it nought, but al hir humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and seyde, 'scrit ne bille,
For love of god, that toucheth swich matere,
Ne bring me noon; and also, uncle dere,
To myn estat have more reward, I preye,
Than to his lust; what sholde I more seye?

163. And loketh now if this be resonable,
And letteth nought, for favour ne for slouthe,
To seyn a sooth; now were it convenable
To myn estat, by god, and by your trouthe,
To taken it, or to han of him routhe,
In harming of my-self or in repreve?
Ber it a-yein, for him that ye on leve!'

164. This Pandarus gan on hir for to stare,
And seyde, 'now is this the grettest wonder
That ever I sey! lat be this nyce fare!
To deethe mote I smiten be with thonder,
If, for the citee which that stondeth yonder,
Wolde I a lettre un-to yow bringe or take
To harm of yow; what list yow thus it make?

165. But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some,
That he that most desireth yow to serve,
Of him ye recche leest wher he bicome,
And whether that he live or elles sterve.
But for al that that ever I may deserve,
Refuse it nought,' quod he, and hente hir faste,
And in hir bosom the lettre doun he thraste,

166. And seyde hir, 'now cast it away anoon,
That folk may seen and gauren on us tweye.'
Quod she, 'I can abyde till they be goon,'
And gan to smyle, and seyde him, 'eem, I preye,
Swich answere as yow list your-self purveye,
For trewely I nil no lettre wryte.'
'No? than wol I,' quod he, 'so ye endyte.'

167. Therwith she lough, and seyde, 'go we dyne.'
And he gan at him-self to jape faste,
And seyde, 'nece, I have so greet a pyne
For love, that every other day I faste'—
And gan his beste japes forth to caste;
And made hir so to laughe at his folye,
That she for laughter wende for to dye.

168. And whan that she was comen in-to halle,
'Now, eem,' quod she, 'we wol go dyne anoon';
And gan some of hir women to hir calle,
And streyght in-to hir chaumbre gan she goon;
But of hir besinesses, this was oon
A-monges othere thinges, out of drede,
Ful prively this lettre for to rede;

169. Avysed word by word in every lyne,
And fond no lak, she thoughte he coude good;
And up it putte, and went hir in to dyne.
And Pandarus, that in a study stood,
Er he was war, she took him by the hood,
And seyde, 'ye were caught er that ye wiste';
'I vouche sauf,' quod he, 'do what yow liste.'

170. Tho wesshen they, and sette hem doun and ete;
And after noon ful sleyly Pandarus
Gan drawe him to the window next the strete,
And seyde, 'nece, who hath arayed thus
The yonder hous, that stant afor-yeyn us?'
'Which hous?' quod she, and gan for to biholde,
And knew it wel, and whos it was him tolde,

171. And fillen forth in speche of thinges smale,
And seten in the window bothe tweye.
Whan Pandarus saw tyme un-to his tale,
And saw wel that hir folk were alle aweye,
'Now, nece myn, tel on,' quod he, 'I seye,
How lyketh yow the lettre that ye woot?
Can he ther-on? for, by my trouthe, I noot.'

172. Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she,
And gan to humme, and seyde, 'so I trowe.'
'Aquyte him wel, for goddes love,' quod he;
'My-self to medes wol the lettre sowe,'
And held his hondes up, and sat on knowe,
'Now, goode nece, be it never so lyte,
Yif me the labour, it to sowe and plyte.'

173. 'Ye, for I can so wryte,' quod she tho;
'And eek I noot what I sholde to him seye.'
'Nay, nece,' quod Pandare, 'sey not so;
Yet at the leste thanketh him, I preye,
Of his good wil, and doth him not to deye.
Now for the love of me, my nece dere,
Refuseth not at this tyme my prevere.'

174. '*Depardieux*,' quod she, 'god leve al be wel!
God helpe me so, this is the firste lettre
That ever I wroot, ye, al or any del.'
And in-to a closet, for to avyse hir bettre,
She wente allone, and gan hir herte unfettre
Out of disdaynes prison but a lyte;
And sette hir doun, and gan a lettre wryte,

175. Of which to telle in short is myn entente
Th'effect, as fer as I can understonde:—
She thonked him of al that he wel mente
Towardes hir, but holden him in honde
She nolde nought, ne make hir-selven bonde
In love, but as his suster, him to plese,
She wolde fayn, to doon his herte an ese.

176. She shette it, and to Pandarus gan goon,
There as he sat and loked in-to strete,
And doun she sette hir by him on a stoon
Of jaspre, up-on a quisshin gold y-bete,
And seyde, 'as wisly helpe me god the grete,
I never dide a thing with more peyne
Than wryte this, to which ye me constreyne';

177. And took it him: he thonked hir and seyde,
'God woot, of thing ful ofte looth bigonne
Cometh ende good; and nece myn, Criseyde,
That ye to him of hard now ben y-wonne
Oughte he be glad, by god and yonder sonne!
For-why men seyth, "impressioun[e]s lighte
Ful lightly been ay redy to the flighte."

178. But ye han pleyed tyraunt neigh to longe,
And hard was it your herte for to grave;
Now stint, that ye no longer on it honge,
Al wolde ye the forme of daunger save.
But hasteth yow to doon him joye have;
For trusteth wel, to longe y-doon hardnesse
Causeth despyt ful often, for distresse.'

179. And right as they declamed this matere,
Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes ende,
Com ryding with his tenthe some y-fere,
Al softely, and thiderward gan bende
Ther-as they sete, as was his wey to wende
To paleys-ward; and Pandare him aspyde,
And seyde, 'nece, y-see who cometh here ryde!

180. O flee not in, he seeth us, I suppose;
Lest he may thinke that ye him eschuwe.'
'Nay, nay,' quod she, and wex as reed as rose.
With that he gan hir humbly to saluwe,
With dreedful chere, and ofte his hewes muwe;
And up his look debonairly he caste,
And bekked on Pandare, and forth he paste.

181. God woot if he sat on his hors a-right,
Or goodly was beseyn, that ilke day!
God woot wher he was lyk a manly knight!
What sholde I drecche, or telle of his aray?
Criseyde, which that alle these thinges say,
To telle in short, hir lyked al y-fere,
His persone, his aray, his look, his chere,

182. His goodly manere and his gentillesse,
So wel, that never, sith that she was born,
Ne hadde she swich routhe of his distresse;
And how-so she hath hard ben her-biforn,
To god hope I, she hath now caught a thorn.
She shal not pulle it out this nexte wyke;
God sende mo swich thornes on to pyke!

183. Pandare, which that stood hir faste by,
Felte iren hoot, and he bigan to smyte,
And seyde, 'nece, I pray yow hertely,
Tel me that I shal axen yow a lyte.
A womman, that were of his deeth to wyte,
With-outen his gilt, but for hir lakked routhe,
Were it wel doon?' Quod she, 'nay, by my trouthe!'

184. 'God helpe me so,' quod he, 'ye sey me sooth.
Ye felen wel your-self that I not lye;
Lo, yond he rit!' Quod she, 'ye, so he dooth.'
'Wel,' quod Pandare, 'as I have told yow thrye,
Lat be your nyce shame and your folye,
And spek with him in esing of his herte;
Lat nycetee not do yow bothe smerte.'

185. But ther-on was to heven and to done;
Considered al thing, it may not be;
And why, for shame; and it were eek to sone
To graunten him so greet a libertee.
'For playnly hir entente,' as seyde she,
'Was for to love him unwist, if she mighte,
And guerdon him with no-thing but with sighte.'

186. But Pandarus thoughte, 'it shal not be so,
If that I may; this nyce opinioun
Shal not be holden fully yeres two.'
What sholde I make of this a long sermoun?
He moste assente on that conclusioun
As for the tyme; and whan that it was eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.

187. And on his wey ful faste homward he spedde,
And right for joye he felte his herte daunce;
And Troilus he fond alone a-bedde,
That lay as dooth these loveres, in a traunce,
Bitwixen hope and derk desesperaunce.
But Pandarus, right at his in-cominge,
He song, as who seyth, 'lo! sumwhat I bringe.'

188. And seyde, 'who is in his bed so sone
Y-buried thus?' 'It am I, freend,' quod he.
'Who, Troilus? nay helpe me so the mone,'
Quod Pandarus, 'thou shalt aryse and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can helen thee of thyn accesse,
If thou do forth-with al thy besinesse.'

189. 'Ye, through the might of god!' quod Troilus.
And Pandarus gan him the lettre take,
And seyde, 'pardee, god hath holpen us;
Have here a light, and loke on al this blake.'
But ofte gan the herte glade and quake
Of Troilus, whyl that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede.

190. But fynally, he took al for the beste
That she him wroot, for sumwhat he biheld
On which, him thoughte, he mighte his herte reste,
Al covered she the wordes under sheld.
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That, what for hope and Pandarus biheste,
His grete wo for-yede he at the leste.

191. But as we may alday our-selven see,
Through more wode or col, the more fyr;
Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
Therwith ful ofte encreseth eek desyr;
Or, as an ook cometh of a litel spyr,
So through this lettre, which that she him sente,
Encresen gan desyr, of which he brente.

192. Wherfore I seye alwey, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he dide erst, thurgh hope, and dide his might
To pressen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And wryten to hir of his sorwes sore
Fro day to day; he leet it not refreyde,
That by Pandare he wroot somwhat or seyde;

193. And dide also his othere observaunces
That to a lovere longeth in this cas;
And, after that these dees turnede on chaunces,
So was he outher glad or seyde 'allas!'
And held after his gestes ay his pas;
And aftir swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outher gladde.

194. But to Pandare alwey was his recours,
And pitously gan ay til him to pleyne,
And him bisoughte of rede and som socours;
And Pandarus, that sey his wode peyne,
Wex wel neigh deed for routhe, sooth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte caste
Som of his wo to sleen, and that as faste;

195. And seyde, 'lord, and freend, and brother dere,
God woot that thy disese doth me wo.
But woltow stinten al this woful chere,
And, by my trouthe, or it be dayes two,
And god to-forn, yet shal I shape it so,
That thou shalt come in-to a certayn place,
Ther-as thou mayst thy-self hir preye of grace.

196. And certainly, I noot if thou it wost,
But tho that been expert in love it seye,
It is oon of the thinges that furthereth most,
A man to have a leyser for to preye,
And siker place his wo for to biwreye;
For in good herte it moot som routhe impresse,
To here and see the giltles in distresse.

197. Paraunter thenkestow: though it be so
That kinde wolde doon hir to biginne
To han a maner routhe up-on my wo,
Seyth Daunger, "Nay, thou shalt me never winne;
So reuleth hir hir hertes goost with-inne,
That, though she bende, yet she stant on rote;
What in effect is this un-to my bote?"

198. Thenk here-ayeins, whan that the sturdy ook,
On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,
Receyved hath the happy falling strook,
The grete sweigh doth it come al at ones,
As doon these rokkes or these milne-stones.
For swifter cours cometh thing that is of wighte,
Whan it descendeth, than don thinges lighte.

199. And reed that boweth doun for every blast,
Ful lightly, cesse wind, it wol aryse;
But so nil not an ook whan it is cast;
It nedeth me nought thee longe to forbyse.
Men shal rejoysen of a greet empryse
Acheved wel, and stant with-outen doute,
Al han men been the lenger ther-aboute.

200. But, Troilus, yet tel me, if thee lest,
A thing now which that I shal axen thee;
Which is thy brother that thou lovest best
As in thy verray hertes privitee?'
'Y-wis, my brother Deiphebus,' quod he.
'Now,' quod Pandare, 'er houres twyes twelve,
He shal thee ese, unwist of it him-selve.

201. Now lat me allone, and werken as I may,'
Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho
Which hadde his lord and grete freend ben ay;
Save Troilus, no man he lovede so.
To telle in short, with-outen wordes mo,
Quod Pandarus, 'I pray yow that ye be
Freend to a cause which that toucheth me.'

202. 'Yis, pardee,' quod Deiphebus, 'wel thow wost,
In al that ever I may, and god to-fore,
Al nere it but for man I love most,
My brother Troilus; but sey wherfore
It is; for sith that day that I was bore,
I nas, ne never-mo to been I thinke,
Ayeins a thing that mighte thee for-thinke.'

203. Pandare gan him thonke, and to him seyde,
'Lo, sire, I have a lady in this toun,
That is my nece, and called is Criseyde,
Which som men wolden doon oppressioun,
And wrongfully have hir possessioun:
Wherfor I of your lordship yow biseche
To been our freend, with-oute more speche.'

204. Deiphebus him answerde, 'O, is not this,
That thow spekest of to me thus straungely,
Crisëyda, my freend?' He seyde, 'Yis.'
'Than nedeth,' quod Deiphebus hardely,
Na-more to speke, for trusteth wel, that I
Wol be hir champioun with spore and yerde;
I roughte nought though alle hir foos it herde.

205. But tel me, thou that woost al this matere,
How I might best avaylen? now lat see.'
Quod Pandarus, 'if yë, my lord so dere,
Wolden as now don this honour to me,
To prayen hir to-morwe, lo, that she
Com un-to yow hir pleyntes to devyse,
Hir adversaries wolde of hit agryse.

206. And if I more dorste preye as now,
And chargen yow to have so greet travayle,
To han som of your bretheren here with yow,
That mighten to hir cause bet avayle,
Than, woot I wel, she mighte never fayle
For to be holpen, what at your instaunce,
What with hir othere freendes governaunce.'

207. Deiphebus, which that comen was, of kinde,
To al honour and bountee to consente,
Answerde, 'it shal be doon; and I can finde
Yet gretter help to this in myn entente.
What wolt thow seyn, if I for Eleyne sente
To speke of this? I trow it be the beste;
For she may leden Paris as hir leste.

208. Of Ector, which that is my lord, my brother,
It nedeth nought to preye him freend to be;
For I have herd him, o tyme and eek other,
Speke of Criseyde swich honour, that he
May seyn no bet, swich hap to him hath she.
It nedeth nought his helpes for to crave;
He shal be swich, right as we wole him have.

209. Spek thou thy-self also to Troilus
On my bihalve, and pray him with us dyne.'
'Sire, al this shal be doon,' quod Pandarus;
And took his leve, and never gan to fyne,
But to his neces hous, as streght as lyne,
He com; and fond hir fro the mete aryse;
And sette him doun, and spak right in this wyse.

210. He seyde, 'O veray god, so have I ronne!
Lo, nece myn, see ye nought how I swete?
I noot whether ye the more thank me conne.
Be ye nought war how that fals Poliphete
Is now aboute eft-sones for to plete,
And bringe on yow advocacyës newe?'
'I? no,' quod she, and chaunged al hir hewe.

211. 'What is he more aboute, me to drecche
And doon me wrong? what shal I do, allas?
Yet of him-self no-thing ne wolde I recche,
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That been his freendes in swich maner cas;
But, for the love of god, myn uncle dere,
No fors of that, lat him have al y-fere;

212. With-outen that, I have ynough for us.'
'Nay,' quod Pandare, 'it shal no-thing be so.
For I have been right now at Deiphebus,
And Ector, and myne othere lordes mo,
And shortly maked eche of hem his fo;
That, by my thrift, he shal it never winne
For ought he can, whan that so he biginne.'

213. And as they casten what was best to done,
Deiphebus, of his owene curtasye,
Com hir to preye, in his propre persone,
To holde him on the morwe companye
At diner, which she nolde not denye,
But goodly gan to his preyere obeye.
He thonked hir, and wente up-on his weye.

214. Whanne this was doon, this Pandare up a-noon,
To telle in short, and forth gan for to wende
To Troilus, as stille as any stoon,
And al this thing he tolde him, word and ende;
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende;
And seyde him, 'now is tyme, if that thou conne,
To bere thee wel to-morwe, and al is wonne.

215. Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne;
Lat not for nyce shame, or drede, or slouthe;
Som-tyme a man mot telle his owene peyne;
Bileve it, and she shal han on thee routhe;
Thou shalt be saved by thy feyth, in trouthe.
But wel wot I, thou art now in a drede;
And what it is, I leye, I can arede.

216. Thow thinkest now, "how sholde I doon al this?
For by my cheres mosten folk aspye,
That for hir love is that I fare a-mis;
Yet hadde I lever unwist for sorwe dye."
Now thenk not so, for thou dost greet folye.
For right now have I founden o manere
Of sleighte, for to coveren al thy chere.

217. Thow shalt gon over night, and that as blyve,
Un-to Deiphebus hous, as thee to pleye,
Thy maladye a-wey the bet to dryve,
For-why thou semest syk, soth for to seye.
Sone after that, doun in thy bed thee leye,
And sey, thow mayst no lenger up endure,
And lye right there, and byde thyn aventure.

218. Sey that thy fever is wont thee for to take
The same tyme, and lasten til a-morwe;
And lat see now how wel thou canst it make,
For, par-dee, syk is he that is in sorwe.
Go now, farewel! and, Venus here to borwe,
I hope, and thou this purpos holde ferme,
Thy grace she shal fully ther conferme.'

219. Quod Troilus, 'y-wis, thou nedelees
Counseylest me, that sykliche I me feyne!
For I am syk in ernest, doutelees,
So that wel neigh I sterve for the peyne.'
Quod Pandarus, 'thou shalt the bettre pleyne,
And hast the lasse nede to countrefete;
For him men demen hoot that men seen swete.

220. Lo, holde thee at thy triste cloos, and I
Shal wel the deer un-to thy bowe dryve.'
Therwith he took his leve al softely,
And Troilus to paleys wente blyve.
So glad ne was he never in al his lyve;
And to Pandarus reed gan al assente,
And to Deiphebus hous at night he wente.

221. What nedeth yow to tellen al the chere
That Deiphebus un-to his brother made,
Or his accesse, or his syklich manere,
How men gan him with clothes for to lade,
Whan he was leyd, and how men wolde him glade?
But al for nought, he held forth ay the wyse
That ye han herd Pandare er this devyse.

222. But certeyn is, er Troilus him leyde,
Deiphebus had him prayed, over night,
To been a freend and helping to Criseyde.
God woot, that he it grauntede anon-right,
To been hir fulle freend with al his might.
But swich a nede was to preye him thenne,
As for to bidde a wood man for to renne.

223. The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme
Of meel-tyd, that the faire quene Eleyne
Shoop hir to been, an houre after the pryme,
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde feyne;
But as his suster, hoomly, sooth to seyne,
She com to diner in hir playn entente.
But god and Pandare wiste al what this mente.

224. Come eek Criseyde, all innocent of this,
Antigone, hir sister Tarbe also;
But flee we now prolixitee best is,
For love of god, and lat us faste go
Right to the effect, with-oute tales mo,
Why al this folk assembled in this place;
And lat us of hir saluinges pace.

225. Gret honour dide hem Deiphebus, certeyn,
And fedde hem wel with al that mighte lyke.
But ever-more, 'allas!' was his refreyn,
'My goode brother Troilus, the syke,
Lyth yet'—and therwith-al he gan to syke;
And after that, he peyned him to glade
Hem as he mighte, and chere good he made.

226. Compleyned eek Eleyne of his syknesse
So feithfully, that pitee was to here,
And every wight gan waxen for accesse
A leche anoon, and seyde, 'in this manere
Men curen folk; this charme I wol yow lere.'
But there sat oon, al list hir nought to teche,
That thoughte, best coude I yet been his leche.

227. After compleynt, him gonnen they to preyse,
As folk don yet, whan som wight hath bigonne
To preyse a man, and up with prys him reyse
A thousand fold yet hyer than the sonne:—
'He is, he can, that fewe lordes conne.'
And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme,
He not for-gat hir preysing to conferme.

228. Herde al this thing Criseyde wel y-nough,
And every word gan for to notifye;
For which with sobre chere hir herte lough;
For who is that ne wolde hir glorifye,
To mowen swich a knight don live or dye?
But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle;
For for o fyn is al that ever I telle.

229. The tyme com, fro diner for to ryse,
And, as hem oughte, arisen everychoon,
And gonne a whyl of this and that devyse.
But Pandarus brak al this speche anoon,
And seyde to Deiphebus, 'wole ye goon,
If yourë wille be, as I yow preyde,
To speke here of the nedes of Criseyde?'

230. Eleyne, which that by the hond hir held,
Took first the tale, and seyde, 'go we blyve';
And goodly on Criseyde she biheld,
And seyde, 'Joves lat him never thryve,
That dooth yow harm, and bringe him sone of lyve!
And yeve me sorwe, but he shal it rewe,
If that I may, and alle folk be trewe.'

231. 'Tel thou thy neces cas,' quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus, 'for thou canst best it telle.'—
'My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus;
What sholde I lenger,' quod he, 'do yow dwelle?'
He rong hem out a proces lyk a belle,
Up-on hir fo, that highte Poliphete,
So hëynous, that men mighte on it spete.

232. Answerde of this ech worse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien,
'An-honged be swich oon, were he my brother;
And so he shal, for it ne may not varien.'
What sholde I lenger in this tale tarien?
Pleynly, alle at ones, they hir highten,
To been hir helpe in al that ever they mighten.

233. Spak than Eleyne, and seyde, 'Pandarus,
Woot ought my lord, my brother, this matere,
I mene, Ector? or woot it Troilus?'
He seyde, 'ye, but wole ye now me here?
Me thinketh this, sith Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
She tolde hir-self him al this, er she wente.

234. For he wole have the more hir grief at herte,
By cause, lo, that she a lady is ;
And, by your leve, I wol but right in sterte,
And do yow wite, and that anoon, y-wis,
If that he slepe, or wole ought here of this.'
And in he lepte, and seyde him in his ere,
'God have thy soule, y-brought have I thy bere !'

235. To smylen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus, with-oute rekeninge,
Out wente anoon t'Eleyne and Deiphebus,
And seyde hem, 'so there be no taryinge,
Ne more pres, he wol wel that ye bringe
Crisëyda, my lady, that is here ;
And as he may enduren, he wole here.

236. But wel ye woot, the chaumbre is but lyte,
And fewe folk may lightly make it warm ;
Now loketh ye, (for I wol have no wyte,
To bringe in prees that mighte doon him harm
Or him disesen, for my bettre arm),
Wher it be bet she byde til eft-sones ;
Now loketh ye, that knowen what to doon is.

237. I sey for me, best is, as I can knowe,
That no wight in ne wente but ye tweye,
But it were I, for I can, in a throwe,
Reherce hir cas, unlyk that she can seye ;
And after this, she may him ones preye
To ben good lord, in short, and take hir leve ;
This may not muchel of his ese him reve.

238. And eek, for she is straunge, he wol forbere
His ese, which that him thar nought for yow ;
Eek other thing, that toucheth not to here,
He wol me telle, I woot it wel right now,
That secret is, and for the tounes prow.'
And they, that no-thing knewe of this entente,
With-oute more, to Troilus in they wente.

239. Eleyne in al hir goodly softe wyse,
Gan him saluwe, and womanly to pleye,
And seyde, 'ywis, ye moste alweyes aryse!
Now fayre brother, beth al hool, I preye!'
And gan hir arm right over his sholder leye,
And him with al hir wit to recomforte;
As she best coude, she gan him to disporte.

240. So after this quod she, 'we yow biseke,
My dere brother, Deiphebus, and I,
For love of god, and so doth Pandare eke,
To been good lord and freend, right hertely,
Un-to Criseyde, which that certeinly
Receyveth wrong, as woot wel here Pandare
That can hir cas wel bet than I declare.'

241. This Pandarus gan newe his tunge affyle,
And al hir cas reherce, and that anoon;
Whan it was seyd, sone after, in a whyle,
Quod Troilus, 'as sone as I may goon,
I wol right fayn with al my might ben oon,
Have god my trouthe, hir cause to sustene.'
'Good thrift have ye,' quod Eleyne the quene.

242. Quod Pandarus, 'and it your wille be,
That she may take hir leve, er that she go?'
'Or elles god for-bede,' tho quod he,
'If that she vouche sauf for to do so.'
And with that word quod Troilus, 'ye two,
Deiphebus, and my suster leef and dere,
To yow have I to speke of o matere,

243. To been avysed by your reed the bettre':—
And fond, as hap was, at his beddes heed,
The copie of a tretis and a lettre,
That Ector hadde him sent to axen reed,
If swich a man was worthy to ben deed,
Woot I nought who; but in a grisly wyse
He preyede hem anoon on it avyse.

244. Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfolde
In ernest greet; so dide Eleyne the quene;
And rominge outward, fast it gan biholde,
Downward a steyre, in-to an herber grene,
This ilke thing they redden hem bi-twene;
And largely, the mountaunce of an houre,
They gonne on it to reden and to poure.

245. Now lat hem rede, and turne we anoon
To Pandarus, that gan ful faste prye
That al was wel, and out he gan to goon
In-to the grete chambre, and that in hye,
And seyde, 'god save al this companye!
Com, nece myn; my lady quene Eleyne
Abydeth yow, and eek my lordes tweyne.

246. Rys, take with yow your nece Antigone,
Or whom yow list, or no fors, hardily;
The lasse prees, the bet; com forth with me,
And loke that ye thonke humblely
Hem alle three, and, whan ye may goodly
Your tyme y-see, taketh of hem your leve,
Lest we to longe his restes him bireve.'

247. Al innocent of Pandarus entente,
Quod tho Criseyde, 'go we, uncle dere';
And arm in arm inward with him she wente,
Avysed wel hir wordes and hir chere;
And Pandarus, in ernestful manere,
Seyde, 'alle folk, for goddes love, I preye,
Stinteth right here, and softely yow pleye.

248. Aviseth yow what folk ben here with-inne,
And in what plyt oon is, god him amende!
And inward thus ful softely biginne;
Nece, I conjure and heighly yow defende,
On his half, which that sowle us alle sende,
And in the vertue of corounes tweyne,
Slee nought this man, that hath for yow this peyne!

249. Fy on the devel! thenk which oon he is,
And in what plyt he lyth; com of anoon;
Thenk al swich taried tyd, but lost it nis!
That wol ye bothe seyn, whan ye ben oon.
Secoundelich, ther yet devyneth noon
Up-on yow two; com of now, if ye conne;
Whyl folk is blent, lo, al the tyme is wonne!

250. In titering, and pursuite, and delayes,
The folk devyne at wagginge of a stree;
And though ye wolde han after merye dayes,
Than dar ye nought, and why? for she, and she
Spak swich a word; thus loked he, and he;
Lest tyme I loste, I dar not with yow dele;
Com of therfore, and bringeth him to hele.'

251. But now to yow, ye lovers that ben here,
Was Troilus nought in a cankedort,
That lay, and mighte whispringe of hem here,
And thoughte, 'O lord, right now renneth my sort
Fully to dye, or han anoon comfort';
And was the firste tyme he shulde hir preye
Of love; O mighty god, what shal he seye?

Explicit Secundus Liber.

BOOK III

Incipit Prohemium Tercii Libri.

1. O BLISFUL light, of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde hevene faire!
O sonnes leef, O Joves doughter dere,
Plesaunce of love, O goodly debonaire,
In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire!
O verray cause of hele and of gladnesse,
Y-heried be thy might and thy goodnesse!

2. In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne;
As man, brid, best, fish, herbe and grene tree
Thee fele in tymes with vapour eterne.
God loveth, and to love wol nought werne;
And in this world no lyves creature,
With-outen love, is worth, or may endure.

3. Ye Joves first to thilke effectes glade,
Thorugh which that thinges liven alle and be,
Comeveden, and amorous him made
On mortal thing, and as yow list, ay ye
Yeve him in love ese or adversitee;
And in a thousand formes doun him sente
For love in erthe, and whom yow liste, he hente.

4. Ye fierse Mars apeysen of his ire,
And, as yow list, ye maken hertes digne;
Algates, hem that ye wol sette a-fyre,

They dreden shame, and vices they resigne;
Ye do hem corteys be, fresshe and benigne;
And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth,
The joyes that he hath, your might him sendeth.

5. Ye holden regne and hous in unitee;
Ye soothfast cause of frendship been also;
Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee
Of thinges which that folk on wondren so,
Whan they can not construe how it may jo,
She loveth him, or why he loveth here;
As why this fish, and nought that, cometh to were.

6. Ye folk a lawe han set in universe,
And this knowe I by hem that loveres be,
That who-so stryveth with yow hath the werse:
Now, lady bright, for thy benignitee,
At reverence of hem that serven thee,
Whos clerk I am, so techeth me devyse
Som joye of that is felt in thy servyse.

7. Ye in my naked herte sentement
Inhelde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse.—
Caliope, thy vois be now present,
For now is nede; sestow not my destresse,
How I mot telle anon-right the gladnesse
Of Troilus, to Venus heryinge?
To which gladnes, who nede hath, god him bringe!

Explicit prohemium Tercii Libri.

Incipit Liber Tercius.

8. Lay al this mene whyle Troilus,
Recordinge his lessoun in this manere,
'Ma fey!' thought he, 'thus wole I seye and thus;
Thus wole I pleyne un-to my lady dere;
That word is good, and this shal be my chere;
This nil I not foryeten in no wyse.'
God leve him werken as he gan devyse.

9. And lord, so that his herte gan to quappe,
Heringe hir come, and shorte for to syke!
And Pandarus, that ladde hir by the lappe,
Com neer, and gan in at the curtin pyke,
And seyde, 'god do bote on alle syke!
See, who is here yow comen to visyte;
Lo, here is she that is your deeth to wyte.'

10. Ther-with it semed as he wepte almost;
'A ha,' quod Troilus so rewfully,
'Wher me be wo, O mighty god, thou wost!
Who is al there? I see nought trewely.'
'Sire,' quod Criseyde, 'it is Pandare and I.'
'Ye, swete herte? allas, I may nought ryse
To knele, and do yow honour in som wyse.'

11. And dressede him upward, and she right tho
Gan bothe here hondes softe upon him leye,
'O, for the love of god, do ye not so
To me,' quod she, 'ey! what is this to seye?
Sire, come am I to yow for causes tweye;
First, yow to thonke, and of your lordshipe eke
Continuaunce I wolde yow biseke.'

12. This Troilus, that herde his lady preye
Of lordship him, wex neither quik ne deed,
Ne mighte a word for shame to it seye,
Al-though men sholde smyten of his heed.
But lord, so he wex sodeinliche reed,
And sire, his lesson, that he wende conne,
To preyen hir, is thurgh his wit y-ronne.

13. Criseyde al this aspyede wel y-nough,
For she was wys, and lovede him never-the-lasse,
Al nere he malapert, or made it tough,
Or was to bold, to singe a fool a masse.
But whan his shame gan somwhat to passe,
His resons, as I may my rymes holde,
I yow wol telle, as techen bokes olde.

14. In chaunged vois, right for his verrey drede,
Which vois eek quook, and ther-to his manere
Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, un-to Criseyde, his lady dere,
With look doun cast and humble yolden chere,
Lo, th'alderfirste word that him asterte
Was, twyes, 'mercy, mercy, swete herte!'

15. And stinte a whyl, and whan he mighte out-bringe,
The nexte word was, 'god wot, for I have,
As feythfully as I have had konninge,
Ben youres, also god my sowle save;
And shal, til that I, woful wight, be grave.
And though I dar ne can un-to yow pleyne,
Y-wis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne.

16. Thus muche as now, O wommanliche wyf,
I may out-bringe, and if this yow displese,
That shal I wreke upon myn owne lyf
Right sone, I trowe, and doon your herte an ese,
If with my deeth your herte I may apese.
But sin that ye han herd me som-what seye,
Now recche I never how sone that I deye.'

17. Ther-with his manly sorwe to biholde,
It mighte han maad an herte of stoon to rewe;
And Pandare weep as he to watre wolde,
And poked ever his nece newe and newe,
And seyde, 'wo bigon ben hertes trewe!
For love of god, make of this thing an ende,
Or slee us bothe at ones, er that ye wende.'

18. 'I? what?' quod she, 'by god and by my trouthe,
I noot nought what ye wilne that I seye.'
'I? what?' quod he, 'that ye han on him routhe,
For goddes love, and doth him nought to deye.'
'Now thanne thus,' quod she, 'I wolde him preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente;
Yet wiste I never wel what that he mente.'

19. 'What that I mene, O swete herte dere?'
Quod Troilus, 'O goodly fresshe free!
That, with the stremes of your eyen clere,
Ye wolde som-tyme freendly on me see,
And thanne agreën that I may ben he,
With-oute braunche of vyce in any wyse,
In trouthe alwey to doon yow my servyse

20. As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my wit and al my diligence,
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under your yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deeth, if that I breke your defence;
And that ye deigne me so muche honoure,
Me to comaunden ought in any houre.

21. And I to been your verray humble trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes pacient,
And ever-mo desire freshly newe,
To serven, and been y-lyke ay diligent,
And, with good herte, al holly your talent
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte,
Lo, this mene I, myn owene swete herte.'

22. Quod Pandarus, 'lo, here an hard request,
And resonable, a lady for to werne!
Now, nece myn, by natal Joves fest,
Were I a god, ye sholde sterve as yerne,
That heren wel, this man wol no-thing yerne
But your honour, and seen him almost sterve,
And been so looth to suffren him yow serve.'

23. With that she gan hir eyen on him caste
Ful esily, and ful debonairly,
Avysing hir, and hyed not to faste
With never a word, but seyde him softely,
'Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
And in swiche forme as he can now devyse,
Receyven him fully to my servyse,

24. Biseching him, for goddes love, that he
Wolde, in honour of trouthe and gentilesse,
As I wel mene, eek mene wel to me,
And myn honour, with wit and besinesse,
Ay kepe; and if I may don him gladnesse,
From hennes-forth, y-wis, I nil not feyne:
Now beeth al hool, no lenger ye ne pleyne.

25. But nathelees, this warne I yow,' quod she,
'A kinges sone al-though ye be, y-wis,
Ye shul na-more have soverainetee
Of me in love, than right in that cas is;
Ne I nil forbere, if that ye doon a-mis,
To wrathen yow; and whyl that ye me serve,
Cherycen yow right after ye deserve.

26. And shortly, derë herte and al my knight,
Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely, with al my might,
Your bittre tornen al in-to swetnesse;
If I be she that may yow do gladnesse,
For every wo ye shal recovere a blisse';
And him in armes took, and gan him kisse.

27. Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his yën
To hevene threw, and held his hondes hye,
'Immortal god!' quod he, 'that mayst nought dyen,
Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifye;
And Venus, thou mayst make melodye;
With-outen hond, me semeth that in towne,
For this merveyle, I here ech belle sowne.

28. But ho! no more as now of this matere,
For-why this folk wol comen up anoon,
That han the lettre red: lo, I hem here.
But I conjure thee, Criseyde, and oon,
And two, thou Troilus, whan thow mayst goon,
That at myn hous ye been at my warninge,
For I ful wel shal shape your cominge;

29. And eseth ther your hertes right y-nough ;
And lat see which of yow shal bere the belle
To speke of love a-right !' ther-with he lough,
'For ther have ye a layser for to telle.'
Quod Troilus, 'how longe shal I dwelle
Er this be doon?' Quod he, 'whan thou mayst ryse,
This thing shal be right as I yow devyse.'

30. With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward, right at the steyres ende ;
And lord, so than gan grone Troilus,
His brother and his suster for to blende.
Quod Pandarus, 'it tyme is that we wende ;
Tak, nece myn, your leve at alle three,
And lat hem speke, and cometh forth with me.'

31. She took hir leve at hem ful thriftily,
As she wel coude, and they hir reverence
Un-to the fulle diden hardely,
And speken wonder wel, in hir absence,
Of hir, in preysing of hir excellence,
Hir governaunce, hir wit ; and hir manere
Commendeden, it joye was to here.

32. Now lat hir wende un-to hir owne place,
And torne we to Troilus a-yein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre passe
That Deiphebus hadde in the gardin seyn.
And of Eleyne and him he wolde fayn
Delivered been, and seyde, that him leste
To slepe, and after tales have reste.

33. Eleyne him kiste, and took hir leve blyve,
Deiphebus eek, and hoom wente every wight ;
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryve,
To Troilus tho com, as lyne right ;
And on a paillet, al that glade night,
By Troilus he lay, with mery chere,
To tale ; and wel was hem they were y-fere.

34. Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And alle the dores were faste y-shette,
To telle in short, with-oute wordes mo,
This Pandarus, with-outen any lette,
Up roos, and on his beddes syde him sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse.

35. 'Myn alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God woot, and thou, that it sat me so sore,
When I thee saw so languisshing to-yere,
For love, of which thy wo wex alwey more;
That I, with al my might and al my lore,
Hath ever sithen doon my bisinesse
To bringe thee to joye out of distresse;

36. And have it brought to swich plyt as thou wost,
So that, thorugh me, thow stondest now in weye
To fare wel, I seye it for no bost,
And wostow why? for shame it is to seye,
For thee have I bigonne a gamen pleye
Which that I never doon shal eft for other,
Al-though he were a thousand fold my brother.

37. That is to seye, for thee am I bicomen,
Bitwixen game and ernest, swich a mene
As maken wommen un-to men to comen;
Al sey I nought, thou wost wel what I mene.
For thee have I my nece, of vyces clene,
So fully maad thy gentilesse triste,
That al shal been right as thy-selve liste.

38. But god, that al wot, take I to witnesse,
That never I this for coveityse wroughte,
But only for to abregge that distresse,
For which wel nygh thou deydest, as me thoughte.
But gode brother, do now as thee oughte,
For goddes love, and keep hir out of blame,
Sin thou art wys, and save alwey hir name.

39. For wel thou wost, the name as yet of here
Among the peple, as who seyth, halwed is;
For that man is unbore, I dar wel swere,
That ever wiste that she dide amis.
But wo is me, that I, that cause al this,
May thenken that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eem, and traytor eek y-fere!

40. And were it wist that I, through myn engyn,
Hadde in my nece y-put this fantasye,
To do thy lust, and hoolly to be thyn,
Why, al the world up-on it wolde crye,
And seye, that I the worste trecherye
Dide in this cas, that ever was bigonne,
And she for-lost, and thou right nought y-wonne.

41. Wher-fore, er I wol ferther goon a pas,
Yet eft I thee biseche and fully seye,
That privetee go with us in this cas,
That is to seye, that thou us never wreye;
And be nought wrooth, though I thee ofte preye
To holden secree swich an heigh matere;
For skilful is, thow wost wel, my preyere.

42. And thenk what wo ther hath bitid er this,
For makinge of avauntes, as men rede;
And what mischaunce in this world yet ther is,
Fro day to day, right for that wikked dede;
For which these wyse clerkes that ben dede
Han ever yet proverbed to us yonge,
That "firste vertu is to kepe tonge."

43. And, nere it that I wilne as now t'abregge
Diffusioun of speche, I coude almost
A thousand olde stories thee alegge
Of wommen lost, thorugh fals and foles bost;
Proverbes canst thy-self y-nowe, and wost,
Ayeins that vyce, for to been a labbe,
Al seyde men sooth as often as they gabbe.

44. O tonge, allas! so often here-biforn
Hastow made many a lady bright of hewe
Seyd, "welawey! the day that I was born!"
And many a maydes sorwes for to newe;
And, for the more part, al is untrewe
That men of yelpe, and it were brought to preve;
Of kinde non avauntour is to leve.

45. Avauntour and a lyere, al is on;
As thus: I pose, a womman graunte me
Hir love, and seyth that other wol she non,
And I am sworn to holden it secree,
And after I go telle it two or three;
Y-wis, I am avauntour at the leste,
And lyere, for I breke my biheste.

46. Now loke thanne, if they be nought to blame,
Swich maner folk; what shal I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunte of wommen, and by name,
That never yet bihighte hem this ne that,
Ne knewe hem more than myn olde hat?
No wonder is, so god me sende hele,
Though wommen drede with us men to dele.

47. I sey not this for no mistrust of yow,
Ne for no wys man, but for foles nyce,
And for the harm that in the world is now,
As wel for foly ofte as for malyce;
For wel wot I, in wyse folk, that vyce
No womman drat, if she be wel avysed;
For wyse ben by foles harm chastysed.

48. But now to purpos; leve brother dere,
Have al this thing that I have seyd in minde,
And keep thee clos, and be now of good chere,
For at thy day thou shalt me trewe finde.
I shal thy proces sette in swich a kinde,
And god to-forn, that it shall thee suffyse,
For it shal been right as thou wolt devyse.

49. For wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde ;
Therfore I dar this fully undertake.
Thou wost eek what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set, the chartres up to make.
Have now good night, I may no lenger wake ;
And bid for me, sin thou art now in blisse,
That god me sende deeth or sone lisse.'

50. Who mighte telle half the joye or feste
Which that the sowle of Troilus tho felte,
Heringe th' effect of Pandarus biheste ?
His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,
Gan tho for joye wasten and to-melte,
And al the richesse of his sykes sore
At ones fledde, he felte of hem no more.

51. But right so as these holtes and these hayes,
That han in winter dede been and dreye,
Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,
Whan every lusty lyketh best to pleye :
Right in that selve wyse, sooth to seye,
Wex sodeynliche his herte ful of joye,
That gladder was ther never man in Troye.

52. And gan his look on Pandarus up caste
Ful sobrely, and frendly for to see,
And seyde, 'freend, in Aprille the laste,
As wel thou wost, if it remembre thee,
How neigh the deeth for wo thou founde me ;
And how thou didest al thy bisinesse
To knowe of me the cause of my distresse.

53. Thou wost how longe I it for-bar to seye
To thee, that art the man that I best triste ;
And peril was it noon to thee by-wreye,
That wiste I wel ; but tel me, if thee liste,
Sith I so looth was that thy-self it wiste,
How dorste I mo tellen of this matere,
That quake now, and no wight may us here ?

54. But natheles, by that god I thee swere,
That, as him list, may al this world governe,
And, if I lye, Achilles with his spere
Myn herte cleve, al were my lyf eterne,
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
Wolde it biwreye, or dorste, or sholde conne,
For al the good that god made under sonne;

55. That rather deye I wolde, and determyne,
As thinketh me, now stokked in presoun,
In wrecchednesse, in filthe, and in vermyne,
Catif to cruel king Agamenoun;
And this, in alle the temples of this toun,
Upon the goddes alle, I wol thee swere,
To-morwe day, if that thee lyketh here.

56. And that thou hast so muche y-doon for me,
That I ne may it never-more deserve,
This knowe I wel, al mighte I now for thee
A thousand tymes on a morwen sterve,
I can no more, but that I wol thee serve
Right as thy sclave, whider-so thou wende,
For ever-more, un-to my lyves ende!

57. But here, with al myn herte, I thee biseche,
That never in me thou deme swich folye
As I shal seyn; me thoughte, by thy speche,
That this, which thou me dost for companye,
I sholde wene it were a bauderye;
I am nought wood, al-if I lewed be;
It is not so, that woot I wel, pardee.

58. But he that goth, for gold or for richesse,
On swich message, calle him what thee list;
And this that thou dost, calle it gentilesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and trist;
Departe it so, for wyde-where is wist
How that there is dyversitee requered
Bitwixen thinges lyke, as I have lered.

59. And, that thou knowe I thenke nought ne wene
That this servyse a shame be or jape,
I have my faire suster Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape;
Be she never so faire or wel y-shape,
Tel me, which thou wilt of everichone,
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.

60. But sin that thou hast don me this servyse,
My lyf to save, and for noon hope of mede,
So, for the love of god, this grete empryse
Parforme it out; for now is moste nede.
For high and low, with-outen any drede,
I wol alwey thyne hestes alle kepe;
Have now good night, and lat us bothe slepe.'

61. Thus held him ech with other wel apayed,
That al the world ne mighte it bet amende;
And, on the morwe, whan they were arayed,
Ech to his owene nedes gan entende.
But Troilus, though as the fyr he brende
For sharp desyr of hope and of plesaunce,
He not for-gat his gode governaunce.

62. But in him-self with manhod gan restreyne
Ech rakel dede and ech unbrydled chere,
That alle tho that liven, sooth to seyne,
Ne sholde han wist, by word or by manere,
What that he mente, as touching this matere.
From every wight as fer as is the cloude
He was, so wel dissimulen he coude.

63. And al the whyl which that I yow devyse,
This was his lyf; with al his fulle might,
By day he was in Martes high servyse,
This is to seyn, in armes as a knight;
And for the more part, the longe night
He lay, and thoughte how that he mighte serve
His lady best, hir thank for to deserve.

64. Nil I nought swerë, al-though he lay softe,
That in his thought he nas sumwhat disesed,
Ne that he tornede on his pilwes ofte,
And wolde of that him missed han ben sesed ;
But in swich cas man is nought alwey plesed,
For ought I wot, no more than was he ;
That can I deme of possibilitee.

65. But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this whyle, as writen is in geste,
He say his lady som-tyme ; and also
She with him spak, whan that she dorste or leste,
And by hir bothe avys, as was the beste,
Apoynteden ful warly in this nede,
So as they dorste, how they wolde procede.

66. But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swich awayt alwey, and in swich fere,
Lest any wyght divynen or devyse
Wolde of hem two, or to it leye an ere,
That al this world so leef to hem ne were
As that Cupido wolde hem grace sende
To maken of hir speche aright an ende

67. But thilke litel that they speke or wroughte,
His wyse goost took ay of al swich hede,
It semed hir, he wiste that she thoughte
With-outen word, so that it was no nede
To bidde him ought to done, or ought forbede ;
For which she thoughte that love, al come it late,
Of alle joye hadde opned hir the yate.

68. And shortly of this proces for to pace,
So wel his werk and wordes he bisette,
That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenty thousand tymes, or she lette,
She thonked god she ever with him mette ;
So conde he him governe in swich servyse,
That al the world ne mighte it bet devyse.

69. For-why she fond him so discreet in al,
So secret, and of swich obëisaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hir a wal
Of steel, and sheld from every displesaunce;
That, to ben in his gode governaunce,
So wys he was, she was no more afered,
I mene, as fer as oughte ben requered.

70. And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fyr,
Was ever y-lyke prest and diligent;
To ese his frend was set al his desyr.
He shoof ay on, he to and fro was sent;
He lettres bar whan Troilus was absent.
That never man, as in his freendes nede,
Ne bar him bet than he, with-outen drede.

x 71. But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde
That every word, or sonde, or look, or chere
Of Troilus that I rehersen sholde,
In al this whyle, un-to his lady dere;
I trowe it were a long thing for to here;
Or of what wight that stant in swich disjoynte,
His wordes alle, or every look, to poynte.

72. For sothe, I have not herd it doon er this,
In storye noon, ne no man here, I wene;
And though I wolde I coude not, y-wis;
For ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
That wolde, as seyth myn auctor, wel contene
Neigh half this book, of which him list not wryte;
How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endyte?

73. But to the grete effect: than sey I thus,
That stonding in concord and in quiete
Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus,
As I have told, and in this tyme swete,
Save only often mighte they not mete,
Ne layser have hir speches to fulfelle,
That it befel right as I shal yow telle,

74. That Pandarus, that ever dide his might
Right for the fyn that I shal speke of here,
As for to bringe to his hous som night
His faire nece, and Troilus y-fere,
Wher-as at leyser al this heigh matere,
Touching hir love, were at the fulle up-bounde,
Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde.

75. For he with greet deliberacioun
Hadde every thing that her-to mighte avayle
Forn-cast, and put in execucioun,
And neither laft for cost ne for travayle;
Come if hem lest, hem sholde no-thing fayle;
And for to been in ought espyed there,
That, wiste he wel, an inpossible were.

76. Dredelees, it cleer was in the wind
Of every pye and every lette-game;
Now al is wel, for al the world is blind
In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.
This timber is al redy up to frame;
Us lakketh nought but that we witen wolde
A certein houre, in whiche she comen sholde.

77. And Troilus, that al this purveyaunce
Knew at the fulle, and waytede on it ay,
Hadde here-up-on eek made gret ordenaunce,
And founde his cause, and ther-to his aray,
If that he were missed, night or day,
Ther-whyle he was aboute this servyse,
That he was goon to doon his sacrifyse,

78. And moste at swich a temple alone wake,
Answered of Appollo for to be;
And first, to seen the holy laurer quake,
Er that Apollo spak out of the tree,
To telle him next whan Grekes sholden flee;
And forthy lette him no man, god forbede,
But preye Apollo helpen in this nede.

79. Now is ther litel more for to done,
But Pandare up, and shortly for to seyne,
Right sone upon the chaunging of the mone,
Whan lightles is the world a night or tweyne,
And that the welken shoop him for to reyne,
He streight a-morwe un-to his nece wente;
Ye han wel herd the fyn of his entente.

80. Whan he was come, he gan anoon to pleye
As he was wont, and of him-self to jape;
And fynally, he swor and gan hir seye,
By this and that, she sholde him not escape,
Ne lenger doon him after hir to gape;
But certeynly she moste, by hir leve,
Come soupen in his hous with him at eve.

81. At whiche she lough, and gan hir faste excuse,
And seyde, 'it rayneth; lo, how sholde I goon?'
'Lat be,' quod he, 'ne stond not thus to muse;
This moot be doon, ye shal be ther anoon.'
So at the laste her-of they felle at oon,
Or elles, softe he swor hir in hir ere,
He nolde never come ther she were.

82. Sone after this, to him she gan to rowne,
And asked him if Troilus were there?
He swor hir, 'nay, for he was out of towne,'
And seyde, 'nece, I pose that he were,
Yow thurfte never have the more fere.
For rather than men mighte him ther aspye,
Me were lever a thousand-fold to dye.'

83. Nought list myn auctor fully to declare
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of town y-fare,
As if he seyde ther-of sooth or no;
But that, with-oute awayt, with him to go,
She graunted him, sith he hir that bisoughte,
And, as his nece, obeyed as hir oughte.

84. But nathelees, yet gan she him biseche,
Al-though with him to goon it was no fere,
For to be war of goosish peples speche,
That dremen thinges whiche that never were,
And wel avyse him whom he broughte there;
And seyde him, 'eem, sin I mot on yow triste,
Loke al be wel, and do now as yow liste.'

85. He swor hir, 'yis, by stokkes and by stones,
And by the goddes that in hevene dwelle,
Or elles were him lever, soule and bones,
With Pluto king as depe been in helle
As Tantalus!' What sholde I more telle?
Whan al was wel, he roos and took his leve,
And she to souper com, whan it was eve,

86. With a certayn of hir owene men,
And with hir faire nece Antigone,
And othere of hir wommen nyne or ten;
But who was glad now, who, as trowe ye,
But Troilus, that stood and mighte it see
Thurgh-out a litel windowe in a stewe,
Ther he bishet, sin midnight, was in mewe,

87. Unwist of every wight but of Pandare?
But to the poynt; now whan she was y-come
With alle joye, and alle frendes fare,
Hir eem anoon in armes hath hir nome,
And after to the souper, alle and some,
Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette;
God wot, ther was no deyntee for to fette.

88. And after souper gonnen they to ryse,
At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and glade,
And wel was him that coude best devyse
To lyken hir, or that hir laughen made.
He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.
But at the laste, as every thing hath ende,
She took hir leve, and nedes wolde wende.

89. But O, Fortune, executrice of wierdes,
O influences of thise hevenes hye!
Soth is, that, under god, ye ben our hierdes,
Though to us bestes been the causes wrye.
This mene I now, for she gan hoomward hye,
But execut was al bisyde hir leve,
At the goddes wil; for which she moste bleve.

90. The bente mone with hir hornes pale,
Saturne, and Jove, in Cancro joyned were,
That swich a rayn from hevene gan avale,
That every maner womman that was there
Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray fere;
At which Pandare tho lough, and seyde thenne,
'Now were it tyme a lady to go henne!

91. But goode nece, if I mighte ever plese
Yow any-thing, than prey I yow,' quod he,
'To doon myn herte as now so greet an ese
As for to dwelle here al this night with me,
For-why this is your owene hous, pardee.
For, by my trouthe, I sey it nought a-game,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame.'

92. Criseyde, whiche that coude as muche good
As half a world, tok hede of his preyere;
And sin it ron, and al was on a flood,
She thoughte, as good chep may I dwellen here,
And graunte it gladly with a freendes chere,
And have a thank, as grucche and thanne abyde;
For hoom to goon it may nought wel bityde.

93. 'I wol,' quod she, 'myn uncle leef and dere,
Sin that yow list, it skile is to be so;
I am right glad with yow to dwellen here;
I seyde but a-game, I wolde go.'
'Y-wis, graunt mercy, nece!' quod he tho;
'Were it a game or no, soth for to telle,
Now am I glad, sin that yow list to dwelle.'

94. Thus al is wel ; but tho bigan aright
The newe joye, and al the feste agayn ;
But Pandarus, if goodly hadde he might,
He wolde han hyed hir to bedde fayn,
And seyde, 'lord, this is an huge rayn !
This were a weder for to slepen inne ;
And that I rede us sone to biginne.

95. And nece, woot ye wher I wol yow leye,
For that we shul not liggen fer asonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye,
Heren noise of reynes nor of thonder?
By god, right in my lyte closet yonder.
And I wol in that outer hous allone
Be wardeyn of your wommen everichone.

96. And in this middel chaumbre that ye see
Shul youre wommen slepen wel and softe ;
And ther I seyde shal your-selve be ;
And if ye liggen wel to-night, com ofte,
And careth not what weder is on-lofte.
The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste,
So go we slepe, I trowe it be the beste.'

97. Ther nis no more, but here-after sone,
The voydè dronke, and travers drawe anon,
Gan every wight, that hadde nought to done
More in that place, out of the chaumber gon.
And ever-mo so sternelich it ron,
And blew ther-with so wonderliche loude,
That wel neigh no man heren other coude.

98. Tho Pandarus, hir eem, right as him oughte,
With women swiche as were hir most aboute,
Ful glad un-to hir beddes syde hir broughte,
And took his leve, and gan ful lowe loute,
And seyde, 'here at this closet-dore with-oute,
Right over-thwart, your wommen liggen alle,
That, whom yow liste of hem, ye may here calle.'

99. So whan that she was in the closet leyd,
And alle hir wommen forth by ordenaunce
A-bedde weren, ther as I have seyd,
There was no more to skippen nor to traunce,
But boden go to bedde, with mischaunce,
If any wight was steringe any-where,
And late hem slepe that a-bedde were.

100. But Pandarus, that wel coude eche a del
The olde daunce, and every poynt ther-inne,
Whan that he sey that alle thing was wel,
He thoughte he wolde up-on his werk biginne,
And gan the stewe-dore al softe un-pinne,
And stille as stoon, with-outen lenger lette,
By Troilus a-doun right he him sette.

101. And, shortly to the poynt right for to gon,
Of al this werk he tolde him word and ende,
And seyde, 'make thee redy right anon,
For thou shalt in-to hevene blisse wende.'
'Now blisful Venus, thou me grace sende,'
Quod Troilus, 'for never yet no nede
Hadde I er now, ne halvendel the drede.'

102. Quod Pandarus, 'ne drede thee never a del,
For it shal been right as thou wilt desyre;
So thryve I, this night shal I make it wel,
Or casten al the gruwel in the fyre.'
'Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre,'
Quod Troilus, 'as wis as I thee serve,
And ever bet and bet shal, til I sterve.

103. And if I hadde, O Venus ful of mirthe,
Aspectes badde of Mars or of Saturne,
Or thou combust or let were in my birthe,
Thy fader pray al thilke harm disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayein may turne,
For love of him thou lovedest in the shawe,
I mene Adoon, that with the boor was slawe.

104. O Jove eek, for the love of faire Europe,
The whiche in forme of bole away thou fette ;
Now help, O Mars, thou with thy blody cope,
For love of Cipris, thou me nought ne lette ;
O Phebus, thenk whan Dane hir-selven shette
Under the bark, and laurer wex for drede,
Yet for hir love, O help now at this nede !

105. Mercurie, for the love of Hiersè eke,
For which Pallas was with Aglauros wrooth,
Now help, and eek Diane, I thee biseke,
That this viage be not to thee looth.
O fatal sustren, which, er any clooth
Me shapen was, my destenè me sponne,
So helpeth to this werk that is bi-gonne !'

106. Quod Pandarus, 'thou wrecched mouses herte,
Art thou agast so that she wol thee byte?
Why, don this furred cloke up-on thy sherte,
And folowe me, for I wol han the wyte ;
But byd, and lat me go bifore a lyte.'
And with that word he gan un-do a trappe,
And Troilus he broughte in by the lappe.

107. The sterne wind so loude gan to route
That no wight other noyse mighte here ;
And they that layen at the dore with-oute,
Ful sikerly they slepten alle y-fere ;
And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon with-outen lette,
Ther-as they laye, and softely it shette.

108. And as he com ayeinward privelý,
His nece awook, and asked 'who goth there?'
'My dere nece,' quod he, 'it am I ;
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere' ;
And ner he com, and seyde hir in hir ere,
'No word, for love of god I yow biseche ;
Lat no wight ryse and heren of our speche.'

109. 'What! which wey be ye comen, *benedicite?*
Quod she, 'and how thus unwist of hem alle?'
'Here at this secree trappe-dore,' quod he.
Quod tho Criseyde, 'lat me som wight calle.'
'Ey! god forbede that it sholde falle,'
Quod Pandarus, 'that ye swich foly wroughte!
They mighte deme thing they never er thoughte!

110. It is nought good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause to devyne;
Your wommen slepen alle, I under-take,
So that, for hem, the hous men mighte myne;
And slepen wolen til the sonne shyne.
And whan my tale al brought is to an ende,
Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende.

111. Now nece myn, ye shul wel understonde,'
Quod he, 'so as ye wommen demen alle,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And him hir "leef" and "dere herte" calle,
And maken him an howve above a calle,
I mene, as love an other in this whyle,
She doth hir-self a shame, and him a gyle.

112. Now wherby that I telle yow al this?
Ye woot your-self, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthieste knight,
Oon of this world, and ther-to trouthe plyght,
That, but it were on him along, ye nolde
Him never falsen, whyl ye liven sholde.

113. Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente,
This Troilus, right platly for to seyn,
Is thurgh a goter, by a privè wente,
In-to my chaumbre come in al this reyn,
Unwist of every maner wight, certeyn,
Save of my-self, as wisly have I joye,
And by that feith I shal Pryam of Troye!

114. And he is come in swich peyne and distresse
That, but he be al fully wood by this,
He sodeynly mot falle in-to wodnesse,
But-if god helpe ; and cause why this is,
He seyth him told is, of a freend of his,
How that ye sholde love oon that hatte Horaste,
For sorwe of which this night shalt been his laste.'

115. Criseyde, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hir herte colde,
And with a syk she sorwfully answerde,
'Allas ! I wende, who-so tales tolde,
My dere herte wolde me not holde
So lightly fals ! allas ! conceytes wronge,
What harm they doon, for now live I to longe !

116. Horaste ! allas ! and falsen Troilus ?
I knowe him not, god helpe me so,' quod she ;
'Allas ! what wikked spirit tolde him thus ?
Now certes, eem, to-morwe, and I him see,
I shall ther-of as ful excusen me
As ever dide womman, if him lyke ;'
And with that word she gan ful sore syke.

117. 'O god !' quod she, 'so worldly selinesse,
Which clerkes callen fals felicitee,
Y-medled is with many a bitternesse !
Ful anguisshous than is, god woot,' quod she,
'Condicioun of veyn prosperitee ;
For either joyes comen nought y-fere,
Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.

118. O brotel wele of mannes joye unstable !
With what wight so thou be, or how thou pleye,
Either he woot that thou, joye, art muable,
Or woot it not, it moot ben oon of tweye ;
Now if he woot it not, how may he seye
That he hath verray joye and selinesse,
That is of ignoraunce ay in derknesse ?

119. Now if he woot that joye is transitorie,
As every joye of worldly thing mot flee,
Than every tyme he that hath in memorie,
The drede of lesing maketh him that he
May in no parfit selinesse be.
And if to lese his joye he set a myte,
Than semeth it that joye is worth ful lyte.

120. Wherfore I wol deffyne in this matere,
That trewely, for ought I can espye,
Ther is no verray wele in this world here.
But O, thou wikked serpent Jalousye,
Thou misbeleved and envious folye,
Why hastow Troilus me mad untriste,
That never yet agilte him, that I wiste?'

121. Quod Pandarus, 'thus fallen is this cas.'
'Why, uncle myn,' quod she, 'who tolde him this?
Why doth my dere herte thus, allas?'
'Ye woot, ye nece myn,' quod he, 'what is;
I hope al shal be wel that is amis.
For ye may quenche al this, if that yow leste,
And doth right so, for I holde it the beste.'

122. 'So shal I do to-morwe, y-wis,' quod she,
'And god to-forn, so that it shal suffyse.'
'To-morwe? allas, that were a fayr,' quod he,
'Nay, nay, it may not stonden in this wyse;
For, nece myn, thus wryten clerkes wyse,
That peril is with drecching in y-drawe;
Nay, swich abodes been nought worth an hawe.

123. Nece, al thing hath tyme, I dar avowe;
For whan a chaumber a-fyr is, or an halle,
Wel more nede is, it sodeynly rescowe
Than to dispute, and axe amonges alle
How is this candel in the straw y-falle?
A! *benedicite!* for al among that fare
The harm is doon, and fare-wel feldefare!

124. And, nece myn, ne take it not a-greef,
If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,
God help me so, ye hadde him never leef,
That dar I seyn, now there is but we two;
But wel I woot, that ye wol not do so;
Ye been to wys to do so gret folye,
To putte his lyf al night in jupartye.'

125. 'Hadde I him never leef? By god, I wene
Ye hadde never thing so leef,' quod she.
'Now by my thrift,' quod he, 'that shal be sene;
For, sin ye make this ensample of me,
If I al night wolde him in sorwe see
For al the tresour in the toun of Troye,
I bidde god, I never mote have joye!

126. Now loke thanne, if ye, that been his love,
Shul putte al night his lyf in jupartye
For thing of nought! Now, by that god above,
Nought only this delay comth of folye,
But of malyce, if that I shal nought lye.
What, platly, and ye suffre him in distresse,
Ye neither bountee doon ne gentilesse!'

127. Quod tho Criseyde, 'wol ye doon o thing,
And ye therwith shal stinte al his disese;
Have here, and bereth him this blewe ring,
For ther is no-thing mighte him bettre plese,
Save I my-self, ne more his herte apese;
And sey my dere herte, that his sorwe
Is causeles, that shal be seen to-morwe.'

128. 'A ring?' quod he, 'ye, hasel-wodes shaken!
Ye, nece myn, that ring moste han a stoon
That mighte dede men alyve maken);
And swich a ring, trowe I that ye have noon.
Discrecioun out of your heed is goon;
That fele I now,' quod he, 'and that is routhe;
O tyme y-lost, wel maystow cursen slouthe!

129. Wot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage
Ne sorweth not, ne stinteth eek for lyte?
But if a fool were in a jalous rage,
I nolde setten at his sorwe a myte,
But feffe him with a fewe wordes whyte
Another day, whan that I mighte him finde:
But this thing stont al in another kinde.

130. This is so gentil and so tendre of herte,
That with his deeth he wol his sorwes wreke;
For trusteth wel, how sore that him smerte,
He wol to yow no jalouse wordes speke.
And for-thy, nece, er that his herte breke,
So spek your-self to him of this matere;
For with o word ye may his herte stere.

131. Now have I told what peril he is inne,
And his coming unwist is t' every wight;
Ne, pardee, harm may ther be noon ne sinne;
I wol my-self be with yow al this night.
Ye knowe eek how it is your owne knight,
And that, by right, ye moste upon him triste,
And I al prest to fecche him whan yow liste.'

132. This accident so pitous was to here,
And eek so lyk a sooth, at pryme face,
And Troilus hir knight to hir so dere,
His privè coming, and the siker place,
That, though that she dide him as thanne a grace,
Considered alle thinges as they stode,
No wonder is, sin she dide al for gode.

133. Cryseyde answerde, 'as wisly god at reste
My sowle bringe, as me is for him wo!
And eem, y-wis, fayn wolde I doon the beste,
If that I hadde grace to do so.
But whether that ye dwelle or for him go,
I am, til god me bettre minde sende,
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende.'

134. Quod Pandarus, 'ye, nece, wol ye here?
Dulcarnon called is "fleminge of wrecches";
It semeth hard, for wrecches wol not lere
For verray slouthe or othere wilful teeches;
This seyd by hem that be not worth two fecches.
But ye ben wys, and that we han on honde
Nis neither hard, ne skilful to withstonde.'

135. 'Thanne, eem,' quod she, 'doth her-of as yow list;
But er he come I wil up first aryse;
And, for the love of god, sin al my trist
Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wyse,
So wircheth now in so discreet a wyse,
That I honour may have, and he plesaunce
For I am here al in your governaunce.'

136. 'That is wel seyd,' quod he, 'my nece dere,
Ther good thrift on that wyse gentil herte!
But liggeth stille, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth not no ferther for him sterte;
And ech of yow ese otheres sorwes smerte,
For love of god; and, Venus, I thee herie;
For sone hope I we shulle ben alle merie.'

137. This Troilus ful sone on knees him sette
Ful sobrely, right by hir beddes heed,
And in his beste wyse his lady grette;
But lord, so she wex sodeynliche reed!
Ne, though men sholden smyten of hir heed,
She coude nought a word a-right out-bringe
So sodeynly, for his sodeyn cominge.

138. But Pandarus, that so wel coude fele
In every thing, to pleye anoon bigan,
And seyde, 'nece, see how this lord can knele!
Now, for your trouthe, seeth this gentil man!'
And with that word he for a quisshen ran,
And seyde, 'kneleth now, whyl that yow leste,
Ther god your hertes bringe sone at reste!'

139. Can I not seyn, for she bad him not ryse,
If sorwe it putte out of hir remembraunce,
Or elles if she toke it in the wyse
Of duëtee, as for his observaunce;
But wel finde I she dide him this plesaunce,
That she him kiste, al-though she syked sore;
And bad him sitte a-doun with-outen more.

140. Quod Pandarus, 'now wol ye wel biginne;
Now doth him sitte, gode nece dere,
Upon your beddes syde al there with-inne,
That ech of yow the bet may other here.'
And with that word he drow him to the fere,
And took a light, and fond his contenaunce
As for to loke up-on an old romaunce.

141. Criseyde, that was Troilus lady right,
And cleer stood on a ground of sikernesse,
Al thoughte she, hir servaunt and hir knight
Ne sholde of right non untrouthe in hir gesse,
Yet nathelees, considered his distresse,
And that love is in cause of swich folye,
Thus to him spak she of his jelousye:

142. 'Lo, herte myn, as wolde the excellence
Of love, ayeins the which that no man may,
Ne oughte eek goodly maken resistence;
And eek bycause I felte wel and say
Your grete trouthe, and servyse every day;
And that your herte al myn was, sooth to seyne,
This droof me for to rewe up-on your peyne.

143. And your goodnesse have I founde alwey yit,
Of whiche, my dere herte and al my knight,
I thonke it yow, as fer as I have wit,
Al can I nought as muche as it were right;
And I, emforth my conninge and my might,
Have and ay shal, how sore that me smerte,
Ben to yow trewe and hool, with al myn herte;

144. And dredelees, that shal be founde at preve.—
But, herte myn, what al this is to seyne
Shal wel be told, so that ye noght yow greve,
Though I to yow right on your-self compleyne.
For ther-with mene I fynally the peyne,
That halt your herte and myn in hevinesse,
Fully to sleen, and every wrong redresse.

145. My goode, myn, not I for-why ne how
That Jalousye, allas! that wikked wivere,
Thus causelees is cropen in-to yow;
The harm of which I wolde fayn delivere!
Allas! that he, al hool, or of him slivere,
Shuld have his refut in so digne a place,
Ther Jove him sone out of your herte arace!

146. But O, thou Jove, O auctor of nature,
Is this an honour to thy deitee,
That folk ungiltif suffren here injure,
And who that giltif is, al quit goth he?
O were it leful for to pleyne on thee,
That undeserved suffrest jalousye,
And that I wolde up-on thee pleyne and crye!

147. Eek al my wo is this, that folk now usen
To seyn right thus, "ye, Jalousye is Love!"
And wolde a busshel venim al excusen,
For that o greyn of love is on it shove!
But that wot heighe god that sit above,
If it be lyker love, or hate, or grame;
And after that, it oughte bere his name.

148. But certeyn is, som maner jalousye
Is excusable more than som, y-wis.
As whan cause is, and som swich fantasye
With pietee so wel repressed is,
That it unnethe dooth or seyth amis,
But goodly drinketh up al his distresse;
And that excuse I, for the gentilesse.

149. And som so ful of furie is and despyt,
That it sourmounteth his repressioun;
But herte myn, ye be not in that plyt,
That thanke I god, for whiche your passioun
I wol not calle it but illusioun,
Of habundaunce of love and bisy cure,
That dooth your herte this disese endure.

150. Of which I am right sory, but not wrooth;
But, for my devoir and your hertes reste,
Wher-so yow list, by ordal or by ooth,
By sort, or in what wyse so yow leste,
For love of god, lat preve it for the beste!
And if that I be giltif, do me deye,
Allas! what mighte I more doon or seye?'

151. With that a fewe brighte teres newe
Out of hir eyen fille, and thus she seyde,
'Now god, thou wost, in thought ne dede untrewe
To Troilus was never yet Criseyde.'
With that hir heed doun in the bed she leyde,
And with the shete it wreigh, and syghed sore,
And held hir pees; not o word spak she more.

152. But now help god to quenchen al this sorwe,
So hope I that he shal, for he best may;
For I have seyn, of a ful misty morwe
Folwen ful ofte a mery someres day;
And after winter folweth grene May.
Men seen alday, and reden eek in stories,
That after sharpe shoures been victories.

153. This Troilus, whan he hir wordes herde,
Have ye no care, him liste not to slepe;
For it thoughte him no strokes of a yerde
To here or seen Criseyde his lady wepe;
But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe,
For every teer which that Criseyde a-sterte,
The crampe of deeth, to streyne him by the herte.

154. And in his minde he gan the tyme acurse
That he cam therë, and that he was born;
For now is wikke y-turned in-to worse,
And al that labour he hath doon biforn,
He wende it lost, he thoughte he nas but lorn.
'O Pandarus,' thoughte he, 'allas! thy wyle
Serveth of nought, so weylawey the whyle!'

155. And therwithal he heng a-doun the heed,
And fil on knees, and sorwfully he sighte;
What mighte he seyn? he felte he nas but deed,
For wrooth was she that shulde his sorwes lighte.
But nathelees, whan that he speken mighte,
Than seyde he thus, 'god woot, that of this game,
Whan al is wist, than am I not to blame!'

156. Ther-with the sorwe so his herte shette,
That from his eyen fil ther not a tere,
And every spirit his vigour in-knette,
So they astoned and oppressed were.
The feling of his sorwe, or of his fere,
Or of ought elles, fled was out of towne;
And doun he fel al sodeynly a-swowne.

157. This was no litel sorwe for to see;
But al was hust, and Pandare up as faste,
'O nece, pees, or we be lost,' quod he,
'Beth nought agast'; but certeyn, at the laste,
For this or that, he in-to bedde him caste,
And seyde, 'O theef, is this a mannes herte?'
And of he rente al to his bare sherte;

158. And seyde, 'nece, but ye helpe us now,
Allas, your owne Troilus is lorn!'
'Y-wis, so wolde I, and I wiste how,
Ful fayn,' quod she; 'allas! that I was born!'
'Ye, nece, wol ye pullen out the thorn
That stiketh in his herte?' quod Pandare;
'Sey "al foryeve," and stint is al this fare!'

159. 'Ye, that to me,' quod she, 'ful lever were
Than al the good the sonne aboute gooth';
And therwith-al she swoor him in his ere,
'Y-wis, my dere herte, I am nought wrooth,
Have here my trouthe and many another ooth;
Now speek to me, for it am I, Criseyde!'
But al for nought; yet mighte he not a-breyde.

160. Therwith his pous and pawmes of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wete his temples tweyne,
And, to deliveren him from bittre bondes,
She ofte him kiste; and, shortly for to seyne,
Him to revoken she dide al hir peyne.
And at the laste, he gan his breeth to drawe,
And of his swough sone after that adawe,

161. And gan bet minde and reson to him take,
But wonder sore he was abayst, y-wis.
And with a syk, whan he gan bet a-wake,
He seyde, 'O mercy, god, what thing is this?'
'Why do ye with your-selven thus amis?'
Quod tho Criseyde, 'is this a mannes game?
What, Troilus! wol ye do thus, for shame?'

162. And therwith-al hir arm over him she leyde,
And al foryaf, and ofte tyme him keste.
He thonked hir, and to hir spak, and seyde
As fil to purpos for his herte reste.
And she to that answerde him as hir leste;
And with hir goodly wordes him disporte
She gan, and ofte his sorwes to comforte.

163. Quod Pandarus, 'for ought I can espyen,
This light nor I ne serven here of nought;
Light is not good for syke folkes yën.
But for the love of god, sin ye be brought
In thus good plyt, lat now non hevy thought
Ben hanginge in the hertes of yow tweye':
And bar the candel to the chimeneye.

164. Sone after this, though it no nede were,
Whan she swich othes as hir list devyse
Hadde of him take, hir thoughte tho no fere,
Ne cause eek non, to bidde him thennes ryse.
Yet lesse thing than othes may suffyse
In many a cas; for every wight, I gesse,
That loveth wel meneth but gentilesse.

165. But in effect she wolde wite anoon
Of what man, and eek where, and also why
He jelous was, sin ther was cause noon;
And eek the signe, that he took it by,
She bad him that to telle hir bisily,
Or elles, certeyn, she bar him on honde,
That this was doon of malis, hir to fonde.

166. With-outen more, shortly for to seyne,
He moste obeye un-to his lady heste;
And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne.
He seyde hir, whan she was at swiche a feste
She mighte on him han loked at the leste;
Not I not what, al dere y-nough a risshe,
As he that nedes moste a cause fisshe.

167. And she answerde, 'swete, al were it so,
What harm was that, sin I non yvel mene?
For, by that god that boughte us bothe two,
In alle thinge is myn entente clene.
Swich arguments ne been not worth a bene;
Wol ye the childish jalous contrefete?
Now were it worthy that ye were y-bete.'

168. Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to syke,
Lest she be wrooth, him thoughte his herte deyde;
And seyde, 'allas! upon my sorwes syke
Have mercy, swete herte myn, Criseyde!
And if that, in tho wordes that I seyde,
Be any wrong, I wol no more trespace;
Do what yow list, I am al in your grace.'

169. And she answerde, 'of gilt misericorde!
That is to seyn, that I foryeve al this;
And ever-more on this night yow recorde,
And beth wel war ye do no more amis.'
'Nay, dere herte myn,' quod he, 'y-wis.'
'And now,' quod she, 'that I have do yow smerte,
Foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.'

170. This Troilus, with blisse of that supprysed,
Put al in goddes hond, as he that mente
No-thing but wel; and, sodeynly avysed,
He hir in armes faste to him hente.
And Pandarus, with a ful good entente,
Leyde him to slepe, and seyde, 'if ye ben wyse,
Swowneth not now, lest more folk aryse.'

171. What mighte or may the sely larke seye,
Whan that the sparhauk hath it in his foot?
I can no more, but of thise ilke tweye,
To whom this tale sucre be or soot,
Though that I tarie a yeer, som-tyme I moot,
After myn auctor, tellen hir gladnesse,
As wel as I have told hir hevinesse.

172. Criseyde, which that felte hir thus y-take,
As writen clerkes in hir bokes olde,
Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake,
Whan she him felte hir in his armes folde.
But Troilus, al hool of cares colde,
Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes sevene;
Thus sondry peynes bringen folk to hevene.

173. This Troilus in armes gan hir streyne,
And seyde, 'O swete, as ever mote I goon,
Now be ye caught, now is ther but we tweyne;
Now yeldeth yow, for other boot is noon.'
To that Criseyde answerde thus anoon,
'Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte dere,
Ben yolde, y-wis, I were now not here!'

174. O ! sooth is seyd, that heled for to be
As of a fevre or othere greet syknesse,
Men moste drinke, as men may often see,
Ful bittre drink ; and for to han gladnesse,
Men drinken often peyne and greet distresse ;
I mene it here, as for this aventure,
That thourgh a peyne hath founden al his cure.

175. And now swetnesse semeth more swete,
That bitternesse assayed was biforn ;
For out of wo in blisse now they flete.
Non swich they felten, sith they were born ;
Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorn !
For love of god, take every womman hede
To werken thus, if it comth to the nede.

176. Criseyde, al quit from every drede and tene,
As she that juste cause hadde him to triste,
Made him swich feste, it joye was to sene,
Whan she his trouthe and clene entente wiste.
And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
Bitrent and wryth the sote wode-binde,
Gan eche of hem in armes other winde.

177. And as the newe abaysshed nightingale,
That stinteth first whan she biginneth singe,
Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
Or in the hegges any wight steringe,
And after siker dooth hir voys out-ringe ;
Right so Criseyde, whan hir drede stente,
Opned hir herte, and tolde him hir entente.

178. And right as he that seeth his deeth y-shapen,
And deye moot, in ought that he may gesse,
And sodeynly rescous doth him escapen,
And from his deeth is brought in sikernesse,
For al this world, in swich present gladnesse
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete ;
With worse hap god lat us never mete !

179. Hir armes smale, hir streyghte bak and softe,
Hir sydes longe, fleshly, smothe, and whyte
He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte
Hir snowish throte, hir brestes rounde and lyte;
Thus in this hevene he gan him to delyte,
And ther-with-al a thousand tyme hir kiste;
That, what to done, for joye unnethe he wiste.

180 Than seyde he thus, 'O, Love, O, Charitee,
Thy moder eek, Citherea the swete,
After thy-self next heried be she,
Venus mene I, the wel-willy planete;
And next that, Imenëus, I thee grete;
For never man was to yow goddes holde
As I, which ye han brought fro cares colde.

181. Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thinges,
Who-so wol grace, and list thee nought honouren,
Lo, his desyr wol flee with-outen winges.
For, noldestow of bountee hem socouren
That serven best and most alwey labouren,
Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes,
But-if thy grace passed our desertes.

182. And for thou me, that coude leest deserve
Of hem that nombred been un-to thy grace,
Hast holpen, ther I lykly was to sterve,
And me bistowed in so heygh a place
That thilke boundes may no blisse pace,
I can no more, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounte and thyn excellence!'

183. And therwith-al Criseyde anoon he kiste,
Of which, certeyn, she felte no disese.
And thus seyde he, 'now wolde god I wiste,
Myn herte swete, how I yow mighte plese!
What man,' quod he, 'was ever thus at ese
As I, on whiche the faireste and the beste
That ever I say, deyneth hir herte reste.

184. Here may men seen that mercy passeth right;
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight.
But herte myn, of your benignitee,
So thenketh, though that I unworthy be,
Yet mot I nede amenden in som wyse,
Right thourgh the vertu of your heyghe servyse.

185. And for the love of god, my lady dere,
Sin god hath wrought me for I shal yow serve,
As thus I mene, that ye wol be my stere,
To do me live, if that yow liste, or sterve,
So techeth me how that I may deserve
Your thank, so that I, thurgh myn ignoraunce,
Ne do no-thing that yow be displesaunce.

186. For certes, fresshe wommanliche wyf,
This dar I seye, that trouthe and diligence,
That shal ye finden in me al my lyf,
Ne I wol not, certeyn, breken your defence;
And if I do, present or in absence,
For love of god, lat slee me with the dede,
If that it lyke un-to your womanhede.'

187. 'Y-wis,' quod she, 'myn owne hertes list,
My ground of ese, and al myn herte dere,
Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trist;
But late us falle awey fro this matere;
For it suffyseth, this that seyd is here.
And at o word, with-outen repentaunce,
Wel-come, my knight, my pees, my suffisaunce!'

188. Of hir delyt, or joyes oon the leste
Were impossible to my wit to seye;
But juggeth, ye that han ben at the feste
Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye!
I can no more, but thus thise ilke tweye
That night, be-twixen dreed and sikernesse,
Felten in love the grete worthinesse.

189. O blisful night, of hem so longe y-sought,
How blithe un-to hem bothe two thou were !
Why ne hadde I swich on with my soule y-bought,
Ye, or the leeste joye that was there ?
A-wey, thou foule daunger and thou fere,
And lat hem in this hevene blisse dwelle,
That is so heygh, that al ne can I telle !

190. But sooth is, though I can not tellen al,
As can myn auctor, of his excellence,
Yet have I seyd, and, god to-forn, I shal
In every thing al hoolly his sentence.
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any word in eched for the beste,
Doth therwith-al right as your-selven leste.

191. For myne wordes, here and every part,
I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow, that feling han in loves art,
And putte it al in your discrecioun
T' encrese or maken diminucioun
Of my langage, and that I yow bi-seche ;
But now to purpos of my rather speche.

192. Thise ilke two, that ben in armes laft,
So looth to hem a-sonder goon it were,
That ech from other wende been biraft,
Or elles, lo, this was hir moste fere,
That al this thing but nyce dremes were ;
For which ful ofte ech of hem seyde, ' O swete,
Clippe ich yow thus, or elles I it mete ?'

193. And, lord ! so he gan goodly on hir see,
That never his look ne bleynte from hir face,
And seyde, ' O dere herte, may it be
That it be sooth, that ye ben in this place ?'
' Ye, herte myn, god thank I of his grace !'
Quod tho Criseyde, and therwith-al him kiste,
That where his spirit was, for joye he niste.

194. This Troilus ful ofte hir eyen two
Gan for to kisse, and seyde, 'O eyen clere,
It were ye that wroughte me swich wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere!
Though ther be mercy writen in your chere,
God wot, the text ful hard is, sooth, to finde,
How coude ye with-outen bond me binde?'

195. Therwith he gan hir faste in armes take,
And wel an hundred tymes gan he syke,
Nought swiche sorwful sykes as men make
For wo, or elles whan that folk ben syke,
But esy sykes, swiche as been to lyke,
That shewed his affeccioun with-inne;
Of swiche sykes coude he nought bilinne.

196. Sone after this they speke of sondry thinges,
As fil to purpos of this aventure,
And pleyinge entrechaungeden hir ringes,
Of which I can nought tellen no scripture;
But wel I woot a broche, gold and asure,
In whiche a ruby set was lyk an herte,
Criseyde him yaf, and stak it on his sherte.

197. Lord! trowe ye, a coveitous, a wrecche,
That blameth love and holt of it despyt,
That, of tho pens that he can mokre and kecche,
Was ever yet y-yeve him swich delyt,
As is in love, in oo poynt, in som plyt?
Nay, doutelees, for also god me save,
So parfit joye may no nigard have!

198. They wol sey 'yis,' but lord! so that they lye,
Tho bisy wrecches, ful of wo and drede!
They callen love a woodnesse or folye,
But it shal falle hem as I shal yow rede;
They shul forgo the whyte and eke the rede,
And live in wo, ther god yeve hem mischaunce,
And every lover in his trouthe avaunce!

199. As wolde god, tho wrecches, that dispyse
Servyse of love, hadde eres al-so longe
As hadde Myda, ful of coveityse;
And ther-to dronken hadde as hoot and stronge
As Crassus dide for his affectis wronge,
To techen hem that they ben in the vyce,
And loveres nought, al-though they holde hem nyce!

200. Thise ilke two, of whom that I yow seye,
Whan that hir hertes wel assured were,
Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye,
And eek rehercen how, and whanne, and where,
They knewe hem first, and every wo and fere
That passed was; but al swich hevinesse,
I thanke it god, was tourned to gladnesse.

201. And ever-mo, whan that hem fel to speke
Of any thing of swich a tyme agoon,
With kissing al that tale sholde breke,
And fallen in a newe joye anoon,
And diden al hir might, sin they were oon,
For to recoveren blisse and been at ese,
And passed wo with joye countrepeyse.

202. Reson wil not that I speke of sleep,
For it accordeth nought to my matere;
God woot, they toke of that ful litel keep,
But lest this night, that was to hem so dere,
Ne sholde in veyn escape in no manere,
It was biset in joye and bisinesse
Of al that souneth in-to gentilnesse.

203. But whan the cok, comune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete, and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the dayes messager,
Gan for to ryse, and out hir bemes throwe;
And estward roos, to him that coude it knowe,
Fortuna maior, than anoon Criseyde,
With herte sore, to Troilus thus seyde:—

204. 'Myn hertes lyf, my trist and my plesaunce,
That I was born, allas! what me is wo,
That day of us mot make desseveraunce!
For tyme it is to ryse, and hennes go,
Or elles I am lost for evermo!
O night, allas! why niltow over us hove,
As longe as whanne Almena lay by Jove?

205. O blake night, as folk in bokes rede,
That shapen art by god this world to hyde
At certeyn tymes with thy derke wede,
That under that men mighte in reste abyde,
Wel oughte bestes pleyne, and folk thee chyde,
That there-as day with labour wolde us breste,
That thou thus fleest, and deynest us nought reste!

206. Thou dost, allas! to shortly thyn offyce,
Thou rakel night, ther god, makere of kinde,
Thee, for thyn hast and thyn unkinde vyce,
So faste ay to our hemi-spere binde,
That never-more under the ground thou winde!
For now, for thou so hyest out of Troye,
Have I forgon thus hastily my joye!'

207. This Troilus, that with tho wordes felte,
As thoughte him tho, for piëtous distresse,
The blody teres from his herte melte,
As he that never yet swich hevinesse
Assayed hadde, out of so greet gladnesse,
Gan therwith-al Criseyde his lady dere
In armes streyne, and seyde in this manere:—

208. 'O cruel day, accusour of the joye
That night and love han stole and faste y-wryen,
A-cursed be thy coming in-to Troye,
For every bore hath oon of thy bright yën!
Envyous day, what list thee so to spyen?
What hastow lost, why sekestow this place,
Ther god thy lyght so quenche, for his grace?

209. Allas! what han thise loveres thee agilt,
Dispitous day? thyn be the pyne of helle!
For many a lovere hastow shent, and wilt;
Thy pouring in wol no-wher lete hem dwelle.
What proferestow thy light here for to selle?
Go selle it hem that smale seles graven,
We wol thee nought, us nedeth no day haven.'

210. And eek the sonne Tytan gan he chyde,
And seyde, 'O fool, wel may men thee dispyse,
That hast the Dawing al night by thy syde,
And suffrest hir so sone up fro thee ryse,
For to disesen loveres in this wyse.
What! hold your bed ther, thou, and eek thy Morwe!
I bidde god, so yeve yow bothe sorwe!'

211. Therwith ful sore he sighte, and thus he seyde,
'My lady right, and of my wele or wo
The welle and rote, O goodly myn, Criseyde,
And shal I ryse, allas! and shal I go?
Now fele I that myn herte moot a-two!
For how sholde I my lyf an houre save,
Sin that with yow is al the lyf I have?

212. What shal I doon, for certes, I not how,
Ne whanne, allas! I shal the tyme see,
That in this plyt I may be eft with yow;
And of my lyf, god woot how that shal be,
Sin that desyr right now so byteth me,
That I am deed anoon, but I retourne.
How sholde I longe, allas! fro yow sojourne?

213. But nathelees, myn owene lady bright,
Yit were it so that I wiste outrely,
That I, your humble servaunt and your knight,
Were in your herte set so fermely
As ye in myn, the which thing, trewely,
Me lever were than thise worldes tweyne,
Yet sholde I bet enduren al my peyne.'

214. To that Criseyde answerde right anoon,
And with a syk she seyde, 'O herte dere,
The game, y-wis, so ferforth now is goon,
That first shal Phebus falle fro his spere,
And every egle been the dowves fere,
And every roche out of his place sterte,
Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte!

215. Ye be so depe in-with myn herte grave,
That, though I wolde it turne out of my thought,
As wisly verray god my soule save,
To dyen in the peyne, I coude nought!
And, for the love of god that us hath wrought,
Lat in your brayn non other fantasye
So crepe, that it cause me to dye!

216. And that ye me wolde han as faste in minde
As I have yow, that wolde I yow bi-seche;
And, if I wiste soothly that to finde,
God mighte not a poynt my joyes eche!
But, herte myn, with-oute more speche,
Beth to me trewe, or elles were it routhe;
For I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe!

217. Beth glad for-thy, and live in sikernesse;
Thus seyde I never er this, ne shal to mo;
And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse
To turne ayein, soone after that ye go,
As fayn wolde I as ye, it were so,
As wisly god myn herte bringe at reste!'
And him in armes took, and ofte keste.

218. Agayns his wil, sin it mot nedes be,
This Troilus up roos, and faste him cledde,
And in his armes took his lady free
An hundred tyme, and on his wey him spedde,
And with swich wordes as his herte bledde,
He seyde, 'farewel, my dere herte swete,
Ther god us graunte sounde and sone to mete!'

219. To which no word for sorwe she answerde,
So sore gan his parting hir destreyne ;
And Troilus un-to his palays ferde,
As woo bigon as she was, sooth to seyne ;
So hard him wrong of sharp desyr the peyne
For to ben eft there he was in plesaunce,
That it may never out of his remembraunce.

220. Retorned to his rëal palais, sone
He softe in-to his bed gan for to slinke,
To slepe longe, as he was wont to done,
But al for nought ; he may wel ligge and winke,
But sleep ne may ther in his herte sinke ;
Thenkinge how she, for whom desyr him brende,
A thousand-fold was worth more than he wende.

221. And in his thought gan up and doun to winde
His wordes alle, and every contenaunce,
And fermely impressen in his minde
The leste poynt that to him was plesaunce ;
And verrayliche, of thilke remembraunce,
Desyr al newe him brende, and lust to brede
Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede.

222. Criseyde also, right in the same wyse,
Of Troilus gan in hir herte shette
His worthinesse, his lust, his dedes wyse,
His gentilesse, and how she with him mette,
Thonkinge love he so wel hir bisette ;
Desyring eft to have hir herte dere
In swich a plyt, she dorste make him chere.

223. Pandare, a-morwe which that comen was
Un-to his nece, and gan hir fayre grete,
Seyde, 'al this night so reyned it, allas !
That al my drede is that ye, nece swete,
Han litel layser had to slepe and mete ;
Al night,' quod he, 'hath reyn so do me wake,
That som of us, I trowe, hir hedes ake.'

224. And ner he com, and seyde, 'how stont it now
This mery morwe, nece, how can ye fare?'
Criseyde answerde, 'never the bet for yow,
Fox that ye been, god yeve your herte care!
God helpe me so, ye caused al this fare,
Trow I,' quod she, 'for alle your wordes whyte;
O! who-so seeth yow knoweth yow ful lyte!'

225. With that she gan hir face for to wrye
With the shete, and wex for shame al reed;
And Pandarus gan under for to prye,
And seyde, 'nece, if that I shal ben deed,
Have here a swerd, and smyteth of myn heed.'
With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hir nekke, and at the laste hir kiste.

226. I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye,
What! God foryaf his deeth, and she al-so
Foryaf, and with hir uncle gan to pleye,
For other cause was ther noon than so.
But of this thing right to the effect to go,
Whan tyme was, hom til hir hous she wente,
And Pandarus hath fully his entente.

227. Now torne we ayein to Troilus,
That restelees ful longe a-bedde lay,
And prevely sente after Pandarus,
To him to come in al the haste he may.
He com anoon, nought ones seyde he 'nay,'
And Troilus ful sobrely he grette,
And doun upon his beddes syde him sette.

228. This Troilus, with al the affeccioun
Of frendes love that herte may devyse,
To Pandarus on kneës fil adoun,
And er that he wolde of the place aryse,
He gan him thonken in his beste wyse;
A hondred sythe he gan the tyme blesse,
That he was born to bringe him fro distresse.

229. He seyde, 'O frend, of frendes th' alderbeste
That ever was, the sothe for to telle,
Thou hast in hevene y-brought my soule at reste
Fro Flegiton, the fery flood of helle;
That, though I mighte a thousand tymes selle,
Upon a day, my lyf in thy servyse,
It mighte nought a mote in that suffyse.

230. The sonne, which that al the world may see,
Saw never yet, my lyf, that dar I leye,
So inly fair and goodly as is she,
Whos I am al, and shal, til that I deye;
And, that I thus am hires, dar I seye,
That thanked be the heighe worthinesse
Of love, and eek thy kinde bisinesse.

231. Thus hastow me no litel thing y-yive,
Fo which to thee obliged be for ay
My lyf, and why? for thorugh thyn help I live;
For elles deed hadde I be many a day.'
And with that word doun in his bed he lay,
And Pandarus ful sobrely him herde
Til al was seyd, and thanne he him answerde:

232. 'My dere frend, if I have doon for thee
In any cas, god wot, it is me leef;
And am as glad as man may of it be,
God help me so; but tak now not a-greef
That I shal seyn, be war of this myscheef,
That, there-as thou now brought art in-to blisse,
That thou thy-self ne cause it nought to misse.

233. For of fortunes sharp adversitee
The worst kinde of infortune is this,
A man to have ben in prosperitee,
And it remembren, whan it passed is.
Thou art wys y-nough, for-thy do nought amis;
Be not to rakel, though thou sitte warme,
For if thou be, certeyn, it wol thee harme.

234. Thou art at ese, and hold thee wel ther-inne.
For also seur as reed is every fyr,
As greet a craft is kepe wel as winne ;
Brydle alwey wel thy speche and thy desyr.
For worldly joye halt not but by a wyr ;
That preveth wel, it brest alday so ofte ;
For-thy nede is to werke with it softe.'

235. Quod Troilus, 'I hope, and god to-forn,
My dere frend, that I shal so me bere,
That in my gilt ther shal no thing be lorn,
N' I nil not rakle as for to greven here ;
It nedeth not this matere ofte tere ;
For wistestow myn herte wel, Pandare,
God woot, of this thou woldest litel care.'

236. Tho gan he telle him of his glade night,
And wher-of first his herte dredde, and how,
And seyde, 'freend, as I am trewe knight,
And by that feyth I shal to god and yow,
I hadde it never half so hote as now ;
And ay the more that desyr me byteth
To love hir best, the more it me delyteth.

237. I noot my-self not wisly what it is ;
But now I fele a newe qualitee,
Ye, al another than I dide er this.'
Pandare answerde, and seyde thus, that he
That ones may in hevene blisse be,
He feleth other weyes, dar I leye,
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it seye.

238. This is o word for al ; this Troilus
Was never ful, to speke of this matere,
And for to preysen un-to Pandarus
The bountee of his righte lady dere,
And Pandarus to thanke and maken chere.
This tale ay was span-newe to biginne
Til that the night departed hem a-twinne.

239. Sone after this, for that fortune it wolde,
I-comen was the blisful tyme swete,
That Troilus was warned that he sholde,
Ther he was erst, Criseyde his lady mete ;
For which he felte his herte in joye flete ;
And feythfully gan alle the goddes herie ;
And lat see now if that he can be merie.

240. And holden was the forme and al the wyse,
Of hir cominge, and eek of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devyse.
But playnly to the effect right for to go,
In joye and seurte Pandarus hem two
A-bedde broughte, whan hem both leste,
And thus they ben in quiete and in reste.

241. Nought nedeth it to yow, sin they ben met,
To aske at me if that they blythe were ;
For if it erst were wel, tho was it bet
A thousand-fold, this nedeth not enquere.
A-gon was every sorwe and every fere ;
And bothe, y-wis, they hadde, and so they wende,
As muche joye as herte may comprende.

242. This is no litel thing of for to seye,
This passeth every wit for to devyse ;
For eche of hem gan otheres lust obeye ;
Felicitee, which that thise clerkes wyse
Commenden so, ne may not here suffyse.
This joye may not writen been with inke,
This passeth al that herte may bithinke.

243. But cruel day, so wel-awey the stounde !
Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knewe,
For whiche hem thoughte felen dethes wounde ;
So wo was hem, that changen gan hir hewe,
And day they gonnen to dispyse al newe,
Calling it traytour, envyous, and worse,
And bitterly the dayes light they curse.

244. Quod Troilus, 'allas! now am I war
That Pirous and tho swifte stedes three,
Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes char,
Han goon som by-path in despyt of me;
That maketh it so sone day to be;
And, for the sonne him hasteth thus to ryse,
Ne shal I never doon him sacrifyse!'

245. But nedes day departe moste hem sone,
And whanne hir speche doon was and hir chere,
They twinne anoon as they were wont to done,
And setten tyme of meting eft y-fere;
And many a night they wroughte in this manere.
And thus Fortune a tyme ladde in joye
Criseyde, and eek this kinges sone of Troye.

246. In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singinges,
This Troilus gan al his lyf to lede;
He spendeth, justeth, maketh festeyinges;
He yeveth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede,
And held aboute him alwey, out of drede,
A world of folk, as cam him wel of kinde,
The fressheste and the beste he coude finde;

247. That swich a voys was of him and a stevene
Thorugh-out the world, of honour and largesse,
That it up rong un-to the yate of hevene.
And, as in love, he was in swich gladnesse,
That, in his herte he demede, as I gesse,
That there nis lovere in this world at ese
So wel as he, and thus gan love him plese.

248. The godlihede or beautee which that kinde
In any other lady hadde y-set
Can not the mountaunce of a knot unbinde,
A-boute his herte, of al Criseydes net.
He was so narwe y-masked and y-knet,
That it undoon on any manere syde,
That nil not been, for ought that may betyde.

249. And by the hond ful ofte he wolde take
This Pandarus, and in-to gardin lede,
And swich a feste and swich a proces make
Him of Criseyde, and of hir womanhede,
And of hir beautee, that, with-outen drede,
It was an hevene his wordes for to here;
And thanne he wolde singe in this manere:

250. 'Love, that of erthe and see hath governaunce,
Love, that his hestes hath in heven hye,
Love, that with an holsom alliaunce
Halt peples joyned, as him list hem gye,
Love, that knetteth lawe of companye,
And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle,
Bind this acord, that I have told and telle;

251. That that the world with feyth, which that is stable,
Dyverseth so his stoundes concordinge,
That elements that been so discordable
Holden a bond perpetuely duringe,
That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bringe,
And that the mone hath lordship over the nightes,
Al this doth Love; ay heried be his mightes!

252. That that the see, that gredy is to flowen,
Constreyneth to a certeyn ende so
His flodes, that so fersly they ne growen
To drenchen erthe and al for ever-mo;
And if that Love ought lete his brydel go,
Al that now loveth a-sonder sholde lepe,
And lost were al, that Love halt now to-hepe.

253. So wolde god, that auctor is of kinde,
That, with his bond, Love of his vertu liste
To cerclen hertes alle, and faste binde,
That from his bond no wight the wey out wiste.
And hertes colde, hem wolde I that he twiste
To make hem love, and that hem leste ay rewe
On hertes sore, and kep hem that ben trewe.'

254. In alle nedes, for the tounes werre,
He was, and ay the firste in armes dight;
And certeynly, but-if that bokes erre,
Save Ector, most y-drad of any wight;
And this encrees of hardinesse and might
Cam him of love, his ladies thank to winne,
That altered his spirit so with-inne.

255. In tyme of trewe, on haukinge wolde he ryde,
Or elles hunten boor, bere, or lyoun;
The smale bestes leet he gon bi-syde.
And whan that he com rydinge in-to toun,
Ful ofte his lady, from hir window doun,
As fresh as faucon comen out of muwe,
Ful redy was, him goodly to saluwe.

256. And most of love and vertu was his speche,
And in despyt hadde alle wrecchednesse;
And doutelees, no nede was him biseche
To honouren hem that hadde worthinesse,
And esen hem that weren in distresse.
And glad was he if any wight wel ferde,
That lover was, whan he it wiste or herde.

257. For sooth to seyn, he lost held every wight
But-if he were in loves heigh servyse,
I mene folk that oughte it been of right.
And over al this, so wel coude he devyse
Of sentement, and in so unkouth wyse
Al his array, that every lover thoughte,
That al was wel, what-so he seyde or wroughte.

258. And though that he be come of blood royal,
Him liste of pryde at no wight for to chase;
Benigne he was to ech in general,
For which he gat him thank in every place.
Thus wolde Love, y-heried be his grace,
That Pryde, Envye, Ire, and Avaryce
He gan to flee, and every other vyce.

259. Thou lady bright, the doughter to Dione,
Thy blinde and winged sone eek, daun Cupyde;
Ye sustren nyne eek, that by Elicone
In hil Parnaso listen for to abyde,
That ye thus fer han deyned me to gyde,
I can no more, but sin that ye wol wende,
Ye heried been for ay, with-outen ende!

260. Thourgh yow have I seyd fully in my song
Th'effect and joye of Troilus servyse,
Al be that ther was som disese among,
As to myn auctor listeth to devyse.
My thridde book now ende ich in this wyse;
And Troilus in luste and in quiete
Is with Criseyde, his owne herte swete.

Explicit Liber Tercius.

BOOK IV

[*Prohemium.*]

1. But al to litel, weylawey the whyle,
Lasteth swich joye, y-thonked be Fortune!
That semeth trewest, whan she wol bygyle,
And can to foles so hir song entune,
That she hem hent and blent, traytour comune;
And whan a wight is from hir wheel y-throwe,
Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.

2. From Troilus she gan hir brighte face
Awey to wrythe, and took of him non hede,
But caste him clene oute of his lady grace,
And on hir wheel she sette up Diomede;
For which right now myn herte ginneth blede,
And now my penne, allas! with which I wryte,
Quaketh for drede of that I moot endyte.

3. For how Criseyde Troilus forsook,
Or at the leste, how that she was unkinde,
Mot hennes-forth ben matere of my book,
As wryten folk thorugh which it is in minde.
Allas! that they shulde ever cause finde
To speke hir harm; and if they on hir lye,
Y-wis, hem-self sholde han the vilanye.

4. O ye Herines, Nightes doughtren three,
That endelees compleynen ever in pyne,
Megera, Alete, and eek Thesiphone;
Thou cruel Mars eek, fader to Quiryne,
This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,

So that the los of lyf and love y-fere
Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

Explicit prohemium. Incipit Quartus Liber.

5. Ligginge in ost, as I have seyd er this,
The Grekes stronge, aboute Troye toun,
Bifel that, whan that Phebus shyning is
Up-on the brest of Hercules Lyoun,
That Ector, with ful many a bold baroun,
Caste on a day with Grekes for to fighte,
As he was wont to greve hem what he mighte.

6. Not I how longe or short it was bitwene
This purpos and that day they fighte mente;
But on a day wel armed, bright and shene,
Ector, and many a worthy wight out wente,
With spere in hond and bigge bowes bente;
And in the berd, with-oute lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the feld anoon hem mette.

7. The longe day, with speres sharpe y-grounde,
With arwes, dartes, swerdes, maces felle,
They fighte and bringen hors and man to grounde,
And with hir axes out the braynes quelle.
But in the laste shour, sooth for to telle,
The folk of Troye hem-selven so misledden,
That with the worse at night homward they fledden.

8. At whiche day was taken Antenor,
Maugre Polydamas or Monesteo,
Santippe, Sarpedon, Polynestor,
Polyte, or eek the Trojan daun Ripheo,
And othere lasse folk, as Phebuseo.
So that, for harm, that day the folk of Troye
Dredden to lese a greet part of hir joye.

9. Of Pryamus was yeve, at Greek requeste,
A tyme of trewe, and tho they gonnen trete,
Hir prisoneres to chaungen, moste and leste,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete.
This thing anoon was couth in every strete,

Bothe in th'assege, in toune, and every-where,
And with the firste it cam to Calkas ere.

10. Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde,
In consistorie, among the Grekes, sone
He gan in thringe forth, with lordes olde,
And sette him there-as he was wont to done;
And with a chaunged face hem bad a bone,
For love of god, to don that reverence,
To stinte noyse, and yeve him audience.

11. Thanne seyde he thus, 'lo! lordes myne, I was
Trojan, as it is knowen out of drede;
And if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirst yaf comfort to your nede,
And tolde wel how that ye sholden spede.
For dredelees, thorugh yow, shal, in a stounde,
Ben Troye y-brend, and beten doun to grounde.

12. And in what forme, or in what maner wyse
This town to shende, and al your lust to acheve,
Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse;
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve.
And for the Grekes weren me so leve,
I com my-self in my propre persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to done;

13. Havinge un-to my tresour ne my rente
Right no resport, to respect of your ese.
Thus al my good I loste and to yow wente,
Wening in this you, lordes, for to plese.
But al that los ne doth me no disese.
I vouche-sauf, as wisly have I joye,
For you to lese al that I have in Troye,

14. Save of a doughter, that I lafte, allas!
Slepinge at hoom, whanne out of Troye I sterte.
O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!
How mighte I have in that so hard an herte?
Allas! I ne hadde y-brought hir in hir sherte!
For sorwe of which I wol not live to morwe,
But-if ye lordes rewe up-on my sorwe.

15. For, by that cause I say no tyme er now
Hir to delivere, I holden have my pees;
But now or never, if that it lyke yow,
I may hir have right sone, doutelees.
O help and grace! amonges al this prees,
Rewe on this olde caitif in destresse,
Sin I through yow have al this hevinesse!

16. Ye have now caught and fetered in prisoun
Trojans y-nowe; and if your willes be
My child with oon may have redempcioun.
Now for the love of god and of bountee,
Oon of so fele, allas! so yeve him me.
What nede were it this preyere for to werne,
Sin ye shul bothe han folk and toun as yerne?

17. On peril of my lyf, I shal not lye,
Appollo hath me told it feithfully;
I have eek founde it by astronomye,
By sort, and by augurie eek trewely,
And dar wel seye, the tyme is faste by,
That fyr and flaumbe on al the toun shal sprede;
And thus shal Troye turne in asshen dede.

18. For certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe,
That makeden the walles of the toun,
Ben with the folk of Troye alwey so wrothe,
That thei wol bringe it to confusioun,
Right in despyt of king Lameadoun.
By-cause he nolde payen hem hir hyre,
The toun of Troye shal ben set on-fyre.'

19. Telling his tale alwey, this olde greye,
Humble in speche, and in his lokinge eke,
The salte teres from his eyën tweye
Ful faste ronnen doun by eyther cheke.
So longe he gan of socour hem by-seke
That, for to hele him of his sorwes sore,
They yave him Antenor, with-oute more.

20. But who was glad y-nough but Calkas tho?
And of this thing ful sone his nedes leyde
On hem that sholden for the tretis go,
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde
To bringen hoom king Toas and Criseyde;
And whan Pryam his save-garde sente,
Th'embassadours to Troye streyght they wente.

21. The cause y-told of hir cominge, the olde
Pryam the king ful sone in general
Let here-upon his parlement to holde,
Of which the effect rehersen yow I shal.
Th'embassadours ben answered for fynal,
Th'eschaunge of prisoners and al this nede
Hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede.

22. This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,
For which ful sone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.
But nathelees, he no word to it seyde,
Lest men sholde his affeccioun espye;
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.

23. And ful of anguish and of grisly drede
Abood what lordes wolde un-to it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede,
Th'eschaunge of hir, than thoughte he thinges tweye,
First, how to save hir honour, and what weye
He mighte best th'eschaunge of hir withstonde;
Ful faste he caste how al this mighte stonde.

24. Love him made al prest to doon hir byde,
And rather dye than she sholde go;
But resoun seyde him, on that other syde,
'With-oute assente of hir ne do not so,
Lest for thy werk she wolde be thy fo,
And seyn, that thorugh thy medling is y-blowe
Your bother love, there it was erst unknowe.'

25. For which he gan deliberen, for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde that she wente,
He wolde late hem graunte what hem leste,
And telle his lady first what that they mente.
And whan that she had seyd him hir entente,
Ther-after wolde he werken also blyve,
Though al the world ayein it wolde stryve.

26. Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,
For Antenor how they wolde han Criseyde,
Gan it withstonde, and sobrely answerde :—
'Sires, she nis no prisoner,' he seyde ;
'I noot on yow who that this charge leyde,
But, on my part, ye may eft-sone him telle,
We usen here no wommen for to selle.'

27. The noyse of peple up-stirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw y-set on fyre ;
For infortune it wolde, for the nones,
They sholden hir confusioun desyre.
'Ector,' quod they, 'what goost may yow enspyre,
This womman thus to shilde and doon us lese
Daun Antenor?—a wrong wey now ye chese—

28. That is so wys, and eek so bold baroun,
And we han nede of folk, as men may see ;
He is eek oon, the grettest of this toun ;
O Ector, lat tho fantasyës be !
O king Pryam,' quod they, 'thus seggen we,
That al our voys is to for-gon Criseyde ;'
And to deliveren Antenor they preyde.

29. O Juvenal, lord ! trewe is thy sentence,
That litel witen folk what is to yerne
That they ne finde in hir desyr offence ;
For cloud of errour lat hem not descerne
What best is ; and lo, here ensample as yerne.
This folk desiren now deliveraunce
Of Antenor, that broughte hem to mischaunce !

30. For he was after traytour to the toun
Of Troye ; allas ! they quitte him out to rathe ;
O nyce world, lo, thy discrecioun !
Criseyde, which that never dide hem skathe,
Shal now no lenger in hir blisse bathe ;
But Antenor, he shal com hoom to toune,
And she shal out : thus seyden here and howne.

31. For which delibered was by parlement,
For Antenor to yelden up Criseyde,
And it pronounced by the president,
Al-theigh that Ector 'nay' ful ofte preyde.
And fynaly, what wight that it withseyde,
It was for nought ; it moste been, and sholde ;
For substaunce of the parlement it wolde.

32. Departed out of parlement echone,
This Troilus, with-oute wordes mo,
Un-to his chaumbre spedde him faste allone,
But-if it were a man of his or two,
The whiche he bad out faste for to go,
By-cause he wolde slepen, as he seyde,
And hastely up-on his bed him leyde.

33. And as in winter leves been biraft,
Eche after other, til the tree be bare,
So that ther nis but bark and braunche y-laft,
Lyth Troilus, biraft of ech wel-fare,
Y-bounden in the blake bark of care,
Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,
So sore him sat the chaunginge of Criseyde.

34. He rist him up, and every dore he shette
And windowe eek, and tho this sorweful man
Up-on his beddes syde a-doun him sette,
Ful lyk a deed image pale and wan ;
And in his brest the heped wo bigan
Out-breste, and he to werken in this wyse
In his woodnesse, as I shal yow devyse.

35. Right as the wilde bole biginneth springe
Now here, now there, y-darted to the herte,
And of his deeth roreth in compleyninge,
Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,
Smyting his brest ay with his festes smerte;
His heed to the wal, his body to the grounde
Ful ofte he swapte, him-selven to confounde.

36. His eyen two, for pitee of his herte,
Out stremeden as swifte welles tweye;
The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte
His speche him rafte, unnethes mighte he seye,
'O deeth, allas! why niltow do me deye?
A-cursed be the day which that nature
Shoop me to ben a lyves creature!'

37. But after, whan the furie and the rage
Which that his herte twiste and faste threste,
By lengthe of tyme somwhat gan asswage,
Up-on his bed he leyde him doun to reste;
But tho bigonne his teres more out-breste,
That wonder is, the body may suffyse
To half this wo, which that I yow devyse.

38. Than seyde he thus, 'Fortune! allas the whyle!
What have I doon, what have I thus a-gilt?
How mightestow for reuthe me bigyle?
Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?
Shal thus Criseyde awey, for that thou wilt?
Allas! how maystow in thyn herte finde
To been to me thus cruel and unkinde?

39 Have I thee nought honoured al my lyve,
As thou wel wost, above the goddes alle?
Why wiltow me fro joye thus depryve?
O Troilus, what may men now thee calle
But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
In-to miserie, in which I wol biwayle
Criseyde, allas! til that the breeth me fayle?

40. Allas, Fortune! if that my lyf in joye
Displesed hadde un-to thy foule envye,
Why ne haddestow my fader, king of Troye,
By-raft the lyf, or doon my bretheren dye,
Or slayn my-self, that thus compleyne and crye,
I, combre-world, that may of no-thing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve?

41. If that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought roughte I whider thou woldest me stere;
And hir, allas! than hastow me biraft.
But ever-more, lo! this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gerful violence.
Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence.

42. O verray lord of love, O god, allas!
That knowest best myn herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorwful lyf don in this cas
If I for-go that I so dere have bought?
Sin ye Cryseyde and me han fully brought
In-to your grace, and bothe our hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, allas! it be repeled?

43. What I may doon, I shal, whyl I may dure
On lyve in torment and in cruel peyne,
This infortune or this disaventure,
Allone as I was born, y-wis, compleyne;
Ne never wil I seen it shyne or reyne;
But ende I wil, as Edippe, in derknesse
My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.

44. O wery goost, that errest to and fro,
Why niltow fleen out of the wofulleste
Body, that ever mighte on grounde go?
O soule, lurkinge in this wo, unneste,
Flee forth out of myn herte, and lat it breste,
And folwe alwey Criseyde, thy lady dere;
Thy righte place is now no lenger here!

45. O wofulle eyen two, sin your disport
Was al to seen Criseydes eyen brighte,
What shal ye doon but, for my discomfort,
Stonden for nought, and wepen out your sighte?
Sin she is queynt, that wont was yow to lighte,
In veyn fro-this-forth have I eyen tweye
Y-formed, sin your vertue is a-weye.

46. O my Criseyde, O lady sovereyne
Of thilke woful soule that thus cryeth,
Who shal now yeven comfort to my peyne?
Allas, no wight; but when myn herte dyeth,
My spirit, which that so un-to yow hyeth,
Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve;
For-thy no fors is, though the body sterve.

47. O ye loveres, that heighe upon the wheel
Ben set of Fortune, in good aventure,
God leve that ye finde ay love of steel,
And longe mot your lyf in joye endure!
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your felawe resteth there;
For I lovede eek, though I unworthy were.

48. O olde unholsom and mislyved man,
Calkas I mene, allas! what eyleth thee
To been a Greek, sin thou art born Trojan?
O Calkas, which that wilt my bane be,
In cursed tyme was thou born for me!
As wolde blisful Jove, for his joye,
That I thee hadde, where I wolde, in Troye!'

49. A thousand sykes, hottere than the glede,
Out of his brest ech after other wente,
Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to fede,
For which his woful teres never stente;
And shortly, so his peynes him to-rente,
And wex so mat, that joye nor penaunce
He feleth noon, but lyth forth in a traunce.

50. Pandare, which that in the parlement
Hadde herd what every lord and burgeys seyde,
And how ful graunted was, by oon assent,
For Antenor to yelden so Criseyde,
Gan wel neigh wood out of his wit to breyde,
So that, for wo, he niste what he mente;
But in a rees to Troilus he wente.

51. A certeyn knight, that for the tyme kepte
The chaumbre-dore, un-dide it him anoon;
And Pandare, that ful tendreliche wepte,
In-to the derke chaumbre, as stille as stoon,
Toward the bed gan softely to goon,
So confus, that he niste what to seye;
For verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.

52. And with his chere and loking al to-torn,
For sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this woful Troilus biforn,
And on his pitous face he gan biholden;
But lord, so often gan his herte colden,
Seing his freend in wo, whos hevinesse
His herte slow, as thoughte him, for distresse.

53. This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte
His freend Pandare y-comen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte,
For which this sorwful Pandare, of pitee,
Gan for to wepe as tendreliche as he;
And specheles thus been thise ilke tweye,
That neyther mighte o word for sorwe seye.

54. But at the laste this woful Troilus,
Ney deed for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noyse he seyde thus,
Among his sobbes and his sykes sore,
'Lo! Pandare, I am deed, with-outen more.
Hastow nought herd at parlement,' he seyde,
'For Antenor how lost is my Criseyde?'

55. This Pandarus, ful deed and pale of hewe,
Ful pitously answerde and seyde, 'yis!
As wisly were it fals as it is trewe,
That I have herd, and wot al how it is.
O mercy, god, who wolde have trowed this?
Who wolde have wend that, in so litel a throwe,
Fortune our joye wolde han over-throwe?

56. For in this world ther is no creature,
As to my doom, that ever saw ruyne
Straungere than this, thorugh cas or aventure.
But who may al eschewe or al devyne?
Swich is this world; for-thy I thus defyne,
Ne truste no wight finden in Fortune
Ay propretee; hir yeftes been comune

57. But tel me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorwen thus? Why lystow in this wyse,
Sin thy desyr al holly hastow had,
So that, by right, it oughte y-now suffyse?
But I, that never felte in my servyse
A frendly chere or loking of an yë,
Lat me thus wepe and wayle, til I dye.

58. And over al this, as thou wel wost thy-selve,
This town is ful of ladies al aboute;
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
As ever she was, shal I finde, in som route,
Ye, oon or two, with-outen any doute.
For-thy be glad, myn owene dere brother,
If she be lost, we shul recovere another.

59. What, god for-bede alwey that ech plesaunce
In o thing were, and in non other wight!
If oon can singe, another can wel daunce;
If this be goodly, she is glad and light;
And this is fayr, and that can good a-right.
Ech for his vertu holden is for dere,
Bothe heroner and faucon for rivere.

60. And eek, as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys,
"The newe love out chaceth ofte the olde";
And up-on newe cas lyth newe avys.
Thenk eek, thy-self to saven artow holde;
Swich fyr, by proces, shal of kinde colde.
For sin it is but casuel plesaunce,
Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce.

61. For al-so seur as day cometh after night,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or elles selde seinge of a wight,
Don olde affeccioun alle over-go.
And, for thy part, thou shalt have oon of tho
To abrigge with thy bittre peynes smerte;
Absence of hir shal dryve hir out of herte.'

62. Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
To helpe his freend, lest he for sorwe deyde.
For doutelees, to doon his wo to falle,
He roughte not what unthrift that he seyde.
But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde,
Tok litel hede of al that ever he mente;
Oon ere it herde, at the other out it wente:—

63. But at the laste answerde and seyde, 'freend,
This lechecraft, or heled thus to be,
Were wel sitting, if that I were a feend,
To traysen hir that trewe is unto me!
I pray god, lat this consayl never y-thee;
But do me rather sterve anon-right here
Er I thus do as thou me woldest lere.

64. She that I serve, y-wis, what so thou seye,
To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,
Shall han me holly hires til that I deye.
For, Pandarus, sin I have trouthe hir hight,
I wol not been untrewe for no wight;
But as hir man I wol ay live and sterve,
And never other creature serve.

65. And ther thou seyst, thou shalt as faire finde
As she, lat be, make no comparisoun
To creature y-formed here by kinde.
O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,
I wol not be of thyn opinioun,
Touching al this; for whiche I thee biseche,
So hold thy pees; thou sleest me with thy speche.

66. Thow biddest me I sholde love another
Al freshly newe, and lat Criseyde go!
It lyth not in my power, leve brother.
And though I mighte, I wolde not do so.
But canstow pleyen raket, to and fro,
Netle in, dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare?
Now foule falle hir, for thy wo that care!

67. Thow farest eek by me, thou Pandarus,
As he, that whan a wight is wo bi-goon,
He cometh to him a pas, and seyth right thus,
"Thenk not on smert, and thou shalt fele noon."
Thou most me first transmuwen in a stoon,
And reve me my passiounes alle,
Er thou so lightly do my wo to falle.

68. The deeth may wel out of my brest departe
The lyf, so longe may this sorwe myne;
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte
Out never-mo; but doun with Proserpyne,
Whan I am deed, I wol go wone in pyne;
And ther I wol eternally compleyne
My wo, and how that twinned be we tweyne.

69. Thow hast here maad an argument, for fyn,
How that it sholde lasse peyne be
Criseyde to for-goon, for she was myn,
And live in ese and in felicitee.
Why gabbestow, that seydest thus to me
That "him is wors that is fro wele y-throwe,
Than he hadde erst non of that wele y-knowe"?

70. But tel me now, sin that thee thinketh so light
To chaungen so in love, ay to and fro,
Why hastow not don bisily thy might
To chaungen hir that doth thee al thy wo?
Why niltow lete hir fro thyn herte go?
Why niltow love an-other lady swete,
That may thyn herte setten in quiete?

71. If thou hast had in love ay yet mischaunce,
And canst it not out of thyn herte dryve,
I, that livede in lust and in plesaunce
With hir as muche as creature on-lyve,
How sholde I that forvete, and that so blyve?
O where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,
That canst so wel and formely arguwe?

72. Nay, nay, god wot, nought worth is al thy reed,
For which, for what that ever may bifalle,
With-outen wordes mo, I wol be deed.
O deeth, that endere art of sorwes alle,
Com now, sin I so ofte after thee calle;
For sely is that deeth, soth for to seyne,
That, ofte y-cleped, cometh and endeth peyne.

73. Wel wot I, whyl my lyf was in quiete,
Er thou me slowe, I wolde have yeven hyre;
But now thy cominge is to me so swete,
That in this world I no-thing so desyre.
O deeth, sin with this sorwe I am a-fyre,
Thou outher do me anoon in teres drenche,
Or with thy colde strook myn hete quenche!

74. Sin that thou sleest so fele in sondry wyse
Ayens hir wil, unpreyed, day and night,
Do me, at my requeste, this servyse,
Delivere now the world, so dostow right,
Of me, that am the wofulleste wight
That ever was; for tyme is that I sterve,
Sin in this world of right nought may I serve.

75. This Troilus in teres gan distille,
As licour out of alambyk ful faste;
And Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille,
And to the ground his eyen doun he caste.
But nathelees, thus thoughte he at the laste,
'What, parde, rather than my felawe deye,
Yet shal I som-what more un-to him seye':

76. And seyde, 'freend, sin thou hast swich distresse,
And sin thee list myn arguments to blame,
Why nilt thy-selven helpen doon redresse,
And with thy manhod letten al this grame?
Go ravisshe hir ne canstow not for shame!
And outher lat hir out of toune fare,
Or hold hir stille, and leve thy nyce fare.

77. Artow in Troye, and hast non hardiment
To take a womman which that loveth thee,
And wolde hir-selven been of thyn assent?
Now is not this a nyce vanitee?
Rys up anoon, and lat this weping be,
And kyth thou art a man, for in this houre
I wil be deed, or she shal bleven oure.'

78. To this answerde him Troilus ful softe,
And seyde, 'parde, leve brother dere,
Al this have I my-self yet thought ful ofte,
And more thing than thou devysest here.
But why this thing is laft, thou shalt wel here;
And whan thou me hast yeve an audience,
Ther-after mayst thou telle al thy sentence.

79. First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre
For ravisshing of wommen so by might,
It sholde not be suffred me to erre,
As it stant now, ne doon so gret unright.
I sholde han also blame of every wight,
My fadres graunt if that I so withstode,
Sin she is chaunged for the tounes goode.

80. I have eek thought, so it were hir assent,
To aske hir at my fader, of his grace;
Than thenke I, this were hir accusement,
Sin wel I woot I may hir not purchace.
For sin my fader, in so heigh a place
As parlement, hath hir eschaunge enseled,
He nil for me his lettre be repeled.

81. Yet drede I most hir herte to pertourbe
With violence, if I do swich a game;
For if I wolde it openly distourbe,
It moste been disclaundre to hir name.
And me were lever deed than hir defame,
As nolde god but-if I sholde have
Hir honour lever than my lyf to save!

82. Thus am I lost, for ought that I can see;
For certeyn is, sin that I am hir knight,
I moste hir honour lever han than me
In every cas, as lovere oughte of right.
Thus am I with desyr and reson twight;
Desyr for to distourben hir me redeth,
And reson nil not, so myn herte dredeth.'

83. Thus wepinge that he coude never cesse,
He seyde, 'allas! how shal I, wrecche, fare?
For wel fele I alwey my love encresse,
And hope is lasse and lasse alwey, Pandare!
Encressen eek the causes of my care;
So wel-a-wey, why nil myn herte breste?
For, as in love, ther is but litel reste.'

84. Pandare answerde, 'freend, thou mayst, for me,
Don as thee list; but hadde ich it so hote,
And thyn estat, she sholde go with me;
Though al this toun cryede on this thing by note,
I nolde sette at al that noyse a grote.
For when men han wel cryed, than wol they roune;
A wonder last but nyne night never in toune.

85. Devyne not in reson ay so depe
Ne curteysly, but help thy-self anoon ;
Bet is that oŏhere than thy-selven wepe,
And namely, sin ye two been al oon.
Rys up, for by myn heed, she shal not goon ;
And rather be in blame a lyte y-founde
Than sterve here as a gnat, with-oute wounde.

86. It is no shame un-to yow, ne no vyce
Hir to with-holden, that ye loveth most.
Paraunter, she mighte holden thee for nyce
To lete hir go thus to the Grekes ost.
Thenk eek Fortune, as wel thy-selven wost,
Helpeth hardy man to his empryse,
And weyveth wrecches, for hir cowardyse.

87. And though thy lady wolde a litel hir greve,
Thou shalt thy pees ful wel here-after make,
But as for me, certayn, I can not leve
That she wolde it as now for yvel take.
Why sholde than for ferd thyn herte quake?
Thenk eek how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love ; and why shaltow not have another?

88. And Troilus, o thing I dar thee swere,
That if Criseyde, whiche that is thy leef,
Now loveth thee as wel as thou dost here,
God helpe me so, she nil not take a-greef,
Though thou do bote a-noon in this mischeef.
And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe,
Thanne is she fals ; so love hir wel the lasse.

89. For-thy tak herte, and thenk, right as a knight,
Thourgh love is broken alday every lawe.
Kyth now sumwhat thy corage and thy might,
Have mercy on thy-self, for any awe.
Lat not this wrecched wo thin herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on sixe and sevene ;
And, if thou deye a martir, go to hevene.

90. I wol my-self be with thee at this dede,
Though ich and al my kin, up-on a stounde,
Shulle in a strete as dogges liggen dede,
Thourgh-girt with many a wyd and blody wounde.
In every cas I wol a freend be founde.
And if thee list here sterven as a wrecche,
A-dieu, the devel spede him that it recche!'

91. This Troilus gan with tho wordes quiken,
And seyde, 'freend, graunt mercy, ich assente;
But certaynly thou mayst not me so priken,
Ne peyne noon ne may me so tormente,
That, for no cas, it is not myn entente,
At shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde,
To ravisshe hir, but-if hir-self it wolde.'

92. 'Why, so mene I,' quod Pandarus, 'al this day.
But tel me than, hastow hir wel assayed,
That sorwest thus?' And he answerde, 'nay.'
'Wher-of artow,' quod Pandare, 'than a-mayed,
That nost not that she wol ben yvel apayed
To ravisshe hir, sin thou hast not ben there,
But-if that Jove tolde it in thyn ere?

93. For-thy rys up, as nought ne were, anoon,
And wash thy face, and to the king thou wende,
Or he may wondren whider thou art goon.
Thou most with wisdom him and othere blende;
Or, up-on cas, he may after thee sende
Er thou be war; and shortly, brother dere,
Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere.

94. For I shal shape it so, that sikerly
Thou shalt this night som tyme, in som manere,
Com speke with thy lady prevely,
And by hir wordes eek, and by hir chere,
Thou shalt ful sone aparceyve and wel here
Al hir entente, and in this cas the beste;
And fare now wel, for in this point I reste.'

95. The swifte Fame, whiche that false thinges
Egal reporteth lyk the thinges trewe,
Was thorugh-out Troye y-fied with preste winges
Fro man to man, and made this tale al newe,
How Calkas doughter, with hir brighte hewe,
At parlement, with-oute wordes more,
I-graunted was in chaunge of Antenore.

96. The whiche tale anoon-right as Criseyde
Had herd, she which that of hir fader roughte,
As in this cas, right nought, ne whanne he deyde,
Ful bisily to Juppiter bisoughte
Yeve him mischaunce that this tretis broughte.
But shortly, lest thise tales sothe were,
She dorste at no wight asken it, for fere;

97. As she that hadde hir herte and al hir minde
On Troilus y-set so wonder faste,
That al this world ne might hir love unbinde,
Ne Troilus out of hir herte caste;
She wol ben his, whyl that hir lyf may laste.
And thus she brenneth bothe in love and drede,
So that she niste what was best to rede.

98. But as men seen in toune, and al aboute,
That wommen usen frendes to visyte,
So to Criseyde of wommen com a route
For pitous joye, and wenden hir delyte;
And with hir tales, dere y-nough a myte,
These wommen, whiche that in the cite dwelle,
They sette hem doun, and seyde as I shal telle.

99 Quod first that oon, 'I am glad, trewely,
By-cause of yow, that shal your fader see.'
A-nother seyde, 'y-wis, so nam not I;
For al to litel hath she with us be.'
Quod tho the thridde, 'I hope, y-wis, that she
Shal bringen us the pees on every syde,
That, whan she gooth, almighty god hir gyde!'

100. Tho wordes and tho wommannisshe thinges,
She herde hem right as though she thennes were ;
For, god it wot, hir herte on other thing is,
Although the body sat among hem there.
Hir advertence is alwey elles-where ;
For Troilus ful faste hir soule soughte ;
With-outen word, alwey on him she thoughte.

101. Thise wommen, that thus wenden hir to plese,
Aboute nought gonne alle hir tales spende ;
Swich vanitee ne can don hir non ese,
As she that, al this mene whyle, brende
Of other passioun than that they wende,
So that she felte almost hir herte dye
For wo, and wery of that companye.

102. For which no lenger mighte she restreyne
Hir teres, so they gonnen up to welle,
That yeven signes of the bitter peyne
In whiche hir spirit was, and moste dwelle ;
Remembring hir, fro heven unto which helle
She fallen was, sith she forgoth the sighte
Of Troilus, and sorowfully she sighte.

103. And thilke foles sittinge hir aboute
Wenden, that she wepte and syked sore
By-cause that she sholde out of that route
Departe, and never pleye with hem more.
And they that hadde y-knowen hir of yore
Seye hir so wepe, and thoughte it kindenesse,
And eche of hem wepte eek for hir distresse ;

104. And bisily they gonnen hir conforten
Of thing, god wot, on which she litel thoughte ;
And with hir tales wenden hir disporten,
And to be glad they often hir bisoughte.
But swich an ese ther-with they hir wroughte
Right as a man is esed for to fele,
For ache of heed, to clawen him on his hele !

105. But after al this nyce vanitee
They took hir leve, and hoom they wenten alle.
Criseyede, ful of sorweful pitee,
In-to hir chaumbre up wente out of the halle,
And on hir bed she gan for deed to falle,
In purpos never thennes for to ryse;
And thus she wroughte, as I shal yow devyse.

106. Hir ounded heer, that sonnish was of hewe,
She rente, and eek hir fingres longe and smale
She wrong ful ofte, and bad god on hir rewe,
And with the deeth to doon bote on hir bale.
Hir hewe, whylom bright, that tho was pale,
Bar witnes of hir wo and hir constreynte;
And thus she spak, sobbinge, in hir compleynte:

107. 'Alas!' quod she, 'out of this regioun
I, woful wrecche and infortuned wight,
And born in corsed constellacioun,
Mot goon, and thus departen fro my knight;
Wo worth, allas! that ilke dayes light
On which I saw him first with eyen tweyne,
That causeth me, and I him, al this peyne!'

108. Therwith the teres from hir eyen two
Doun fille, as shour in Aperill, ful swythe;
Hir whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
After the deeth she cryed a thousand sythe,
Sin he that wont hir wo was for to lythe,
She mot for-goon; for which disaventure
She held hir-self a forlost creature.

109. She seyde, 'how shal he doon, and I also?
How sholde I live, if that I from him twinne?
O dere herte eek, that I love so,
Who shal that sorwe sleen that ye ben inne?
O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this sinne!
O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve,
Wo worth that day that thou me bere on lyve!

110. To what fyn sholde I live and sorwen thus?
How sholde a fish with-oute water dure?
What is Criseyde worth, from Troilus?
How sholde a plaunte or lyves creature
Live, with-oute his kinde noriture?
For which ful oft a by-word here I seye,
That, "rotelees, mot grene sone deye."

111. I shal don thus, sin neither swerd ne darte
Dar I non handle, for the crueltee,
That ilke day that I from yow departe,
If sorwe of that nil not my bane be,
Than shal no mete or drinke come in me
Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;
And thus my-selven wol I do to dethe.

112. And, Troilus, my clothes everichoon
Shul blake been, in tokeninge, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agoon,
That wont was yow to setten in quiete;
And of myn ordre, ay til deeth me mete,
The observaunce ever, in your absence,
Shal sorwe been, compleynte, and abstinence.

113. Myn herte and eek the woful goost ther-inne
Biquethe I, with your spirit to compleyne
Eternally, for they shul never twinne.
For though in erthe y-twinned be we tweyne,
Yet in the feld of pitee, out of peyne,
That hight Elysos, shul we been y-fere,
As Orpheus and Erudice his fere.

114. Thus herte myn, for Antenor, allas!
I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene.
But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas,
How shal your tendre herte this sustene?
But herte myn, for-yet this sorwe and tene,
And me also; for, soothly for to seye,
So ye wel fare, I recche not to deye.

115. How mighte it ever y-red ben or y-songe,
The pleynte that she made in hir distresse?
I noot; but, as for me, my litel tonge,
If I discreven wolde hir hevinesse,
It sholde make hir sorwe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Hir heigh compleynte, and therfore I it pace.

116. Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was to Criseyde, as ye han herd devyse,
That for the beste it was accorded thus,
And he ful glad to doon him that servyse,
Un-to Criseyde, in a ful secree wyse,
Ther-as she lay in torment and in rage,
Com hir to telle al hoolly his message.

117. And fond that she hir-selven gan to trete
Ful pitously; for with hir salte teres
Hir brest, hir face y-bathed was ful wete;
The mighty tresses of hir sonnish heres,
Unbroyden, hangen al aboute hir eres;
Which yaf him verray signal of martyre
Of deeth, which that hir herte gan desyre.

118. Whan she him saw, she gan for sorwe anoon
Her tery face a-twixe hir armes hyde,
For which this Pandare is so wo bi-goon,
That in the hous he mighte unnethe abyde,
As he that pitee felte on every syde.
For if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned sore,
Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tymes more.

119. And in hir aspre pleynte than she seyde,
'Pandare first of joyes mo than two
Was cause causinge un-to me, Criseyde,
That now transmuwed been in cruel wo.
Wher shal I seye to yow "wel come" or no,
That alderfirst me broughte in-to servyse
Of love, allas! that endeth in swich wyse?

120. Endeth than love in wo? Ye, or men lyeth!
And alle worldly blisse, as thinketh me,
The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupyeth;
And who-so troweth not that it so be,
Lat him upon me, woful wrecche, y-see,
That my-self hate, and ay my birthe acorse,
Felinge alwey, fro wikke I go to worse.

121. Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al at ones,
Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
As anguish, langour, cruel bitternesse,
A-noy, smert, drede, fury, and eek siknesse.
I trowe, y-wis, from hevene teres reyne,
For pitee of myn aspre and cruel peyne!'

122. 'And thou, my suster, ful of discomfort,'
Quod Pandarus, 'what thenkestow to do?
Why ne hastow to thy-selven som resport,
Why woltow thus thy-selve, allas, for-do?
Leef al this werk and tak now hede to
That I shal seyn, and herkne, of good entente,
This, which by me thy Troilus thee sente.'

123. Torned hir tho Criseyde, a wo makinge
So greet that it a deeth was for to see:—
'Allas!' quod she, 'what wordes may ye bringe?
What wol my dere herte seyn to me,
Which that I drede never-mo to see?
Wol he have pleynte or teres, er I wende?
I have y-nowe, if he ther-after sende!'

124. She was right swich to seen in hir visage
As is that wight that men on bere binde;
Hir face, lyk of Paradys the image,
Was al y-chaunged in another kinde.
The pleye, the laughtre men was wont to finde
In hir, and eek hir joyes everychone,
Ben fled, and thus lyth now Criseyde allone.

125. Aboute hir eyen two a purpre ring
Bi-trent, in sothfast tokninge of hir peyne,
That to biholde it was a dedly thing,
For which Pandare mighte not restreyne
The teres from his eyen for to reyne.
But nathelees, as he best mighte, he seyde
From Troilus thise wordes to Criseyde.

126. 'Lo, nece, I trowe ye han herd al how
The king, with othere lordes, for the beste,
Hath mad eschaunge of Antenor and yow,
That cause is of this sorwe and this unreste.
But how this cas doth Troilus moleste,
That may non erthely mannes tonge seye;
For verray wo his wit is al aweye.

127. For which we han so sorwed, he and I,
That in-to litel bothe it hadde us slawe;
But thurgh my conseil this day, fynally,
He somwhat is fro weping now withdrawe.
And semeth me that he desyreth fawe
With yow to been al night, for to devyse
Remede in this, if ther were any wyse.

128. This, short and pleyne, th'effect of my message,
As ferforth as my wit can comprehende.
For ye, that been of torment in swich rage,
May to no long prologe as now entende;
And her-upon ye may answere him sende.
And, for the love of god, my nece dere,
So leef this wo er Troilus be here.'

129. 'Gret is my wo,' quod she, and sighte sore,
As she that feleth dedly sharp distresse;
'But yet to me his sorwe is muchel more,
That love him bet than he him-self, I gesse.
Allas! for me hath he swich hevinesse?
Can he for me so pitously compleyne?
Y-wis, this sorwe doubleth al my peyne.

130. Grevous to me, got wot, is for to twinne,'
Quod she, 'but yet it hardere is to me
To seen that sorwe which that he is inne;
For wel wot I, it wol my bane be;
And deye I wol in certayn,' tho quod she;
'But bidde him come, er deeth, that thus me threteth,
Dryve out that goost, which in myn herte beteth.'

131. Thise wordes seyd, she on hir armes two
Fil gruf, and gan to wepe pitously.
Quod Pandarus, 'allas! why do ye so,
Syn wel ye wot the tyme is faste by,
That he shal come? Arys up hastely,
That he yow nat biwopen thus ne finde,
But ye wol han him wood out of his minde!

132. For wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,
He wolde him-selve slee; and if I wende
To han this fare, he sholde not come here
For al the good that Pryam may despende.
For to what fyn he wolde anoon pretende,
That knowe I wel; and for-thy yet I seye,
So leef this sorwe, or platly he wol deye.

133. And shapeth yow his sorwe for to abregge,
And nought encresse, leve nece swete;
Beth rather to him cause of flat than egge,
And with som wysdom ye his sorwes bete.
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete,
Or though ye bothe in salte teres dreynte?
Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynte.

134. I mene thus; whan I him hider bringe,
Sin ye ben wyse, and bothe of oon assent,
So shapeth how distourbe your goinge,
Or come ayen, sone after ye be went.
Wommen ben wyse in short avysement;
And lat sen how your wit shal now avayle;
And what that I may helpe, it shal not fayle.'

135. 'Go,' quod Criseyde, 'and uncle, trewely,
I shal don al my might, me to restreyne
From weping in his sight, and bisily,
Him for to glade, I shal don al my peyne,
And in myn herte seken every veyne;
If to this soor ther may be founden salve,
It shal not lakken, certain, on myn halve.'

136. Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte,
Til in a temple he fond him allone,
As he that of his lyf no lenger roughte;
But to the pitouse goddes everichone
Ful tendrely he preyde, and made his mone,
To doon him sone out of this world to pace;
For wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.

137. And shortly, al the sothe for to seye,
He was so fallen in despeyr that day,
That outrely he shoop him for to deye.
For right thus was his argument alwey:
He seyde, he nas but loren, waylawey!
'For al that comth, comth by necessitee;
Thus to be lorn, it is my destinee.

138. For certaynly, this wot I wel,' he seyde,
'That for-sight of divyne purveyaunce
Hath seyn alwey me to for-gon Criseyde,
Sin god seeth every thing, out of doutaunce,
And hem desponeth, thourgh his ordenaunce,
In hir merytes sothly for to be,
As they shul comen by predestinee.

139. But nathelees, allas! whom shal I leve?
For ther ben grete clerkes many oon,
That destinee thorugh argumentes preve;
And som men seyn that nedely there is noon;
But that free chois is yeven us everichoon.
O, welaway! so sleye arn clerkes olde,
That I not whos opinion I may holde.

140. For som men seyn, if god seth al biforn,
Ne god may not deceyved ben, pardee,
Than moot it fallen, though men hadde it sworn,
That purveyaunce hath seyn bifore to be.
Wherfor I seye, that from eterne if he
Hath wist biforn our thought eek as our dede,
We have no free chois, as these clerkes rede.

141. For other thought nor other dede also
Might never be, but swich as purveyaunce,
Which may not ben deceyved never-mo,
Hath feled biforn, with-outen ignoraunce.
For if ther mighte been a variaunce
To wrythen out fro goddes purveyinge,
Ther nere no prescience of thing cominge;

142. But it were rather an opinioun
Uncerteyn, and no stedfast forseinge;
And certes, that were an abusioun,
That god shuld han no parfit cleer witinge
More than we men that han doutous weninge.
But swich an errour up-on god to gesse
Were fals and foul, and wikked corsednesse.

143. Eek this is an opinioun of somme
That han hir top ful heighe and smothe y-shore;
They seyn right thus, that thing is not to come
For that the prescience hath seyn bifore
That it shal come; but they seyn, that therfore
That it shal come, therfore the purveyaunce
Wot it biforn with-outen ignoraunce;

144. And in this manere this necessitee
Retorneth in his part contrarie agayn.
For needfully bihoveth it not to be
That thilke thinges fallen in certayn
That ben purveyed; but nedely, as they seyn,
Bihoveth it that thinges, whiche that falle,
That they in certayn ben purveyed alle.

145. I mene as though I laboured me in this,
To enqueren which thing cause of which thing be;
As whether that the prescience of god is
The certayn cause of the necessitee
Of thinges that to comen been, pardee;
Or if necessitee of thing cominge
Be cause certeyn of the purveyinge.

146. But now ne enforce I me nat in shewinge
How the ordre of causes stant; but wel wot I,
That it bihoveth that the bifallinge
Of thinges wist biforen certeynly
Be necessarie, al seme it not ther-by
That prescience put falling necessaire
To thing to come, al falle it foule or faire.

147. For if ther sit a man yond on a see,
Than by necessitee bihoveth it
That, certes, thyn opinioun soth be,
That wenest or conjectest that he sit;
And ferther-over now ayenward yit,
Lo, right so it is of the part contrarie,
As thus; (now herkne, for I wol not tarie):

148. I seye, that if the opinioun of thee
Be sooth, for that he sit, than seye I this,
That he mot sitten by necessitee;
And thus necessitee in either is.
For in him nede of sitting is, y-wis,
And in thee nede of sooth; and thus, forsothe,
Ther moot necessitee ben in yow bothe.

149. But thou mayst seyn, the man sit not therfore,
That thyn opinion of sitting soth is;
But rather, for the man sit ther bifore,
Therfore is thyn opinion sooth, y-wis.
And I seye, though the cause of sooth of this
Comth of his sitting, yet necessitee
Is entrechaunged, bothe in him and thee.

150. Thus on this same wyse, out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me,
My resoninge of goddes purveyaunce,
And of the thinges that to comen be;
By whiche reson men may wel y-see,
That thilke thinges that in erthe falle,
That by necessitee they comen alle.

151. For al-though that, for thing shal come, y-wis,
Therefore is it purveyed, certaynly,
Nat that it comth for it purveyed is:
Yet nathelees, bihoveth it nedfully,
That thing to come be purveyed, trewely;
Or elles, thinges that purveyed be,
That they bityden by necessitee.

152. And this suffyseth right y-now, certeyn,
For to destroye our free chois every del.—
But now is this abusion to seyn,
That fallinge of the thinges temporel
Is cause of goddes prescience eternel.
Now trewely, that is a fals sentence,
That thing to come sholde cause his prescience.

153. What mighte I wene, and I hadde swich a thought,
But that god purveyth thing that is to come
For that it is to come, and elles nought?
So mighte I wene that thinges alle and some,
That whylom been bifalle and over-come,
Ben cause of thilke sovereyn purveyaunce,
That for-wot al with-outen ignoraunce.

154. And over al this, yet seye I more herto,
That right as whan I woot ther is a thing,
Y-wis, that thing mot nedefully be so;
Eek right so, whan I woot a thing coming,
So mot it come; and thus the bifalling
Of thinges that ben wist bifore the tyde,
They mowe not been eschewed on no syde.'

155. Than seyde he thus, 'almighty Jove in trone,
That wost of al this thing the soothfastnesse,
Rewe on my sorwe, or do me deye sone,
Or bring Criseyde and me fro this distresse.'
And whyl he was in al this hevinesse,
Disputinge with him-self in this matere,
Com Pandare in, and seyde as ye may here.

156. 'O mighty god,' quod Pandarus, 'in trone,
Ey! who seigh ever a wys man faren so?
Why, Troilus, what thenkestow to done?
Hastow swich lust to been thyn owene fo?
What, parde, yet is not Criseyde a-go!
Why lust thee so thy-self for-doon for drede,
That in thyn heed thyn eyen semen dede?

157. Hastow not lived many a yeer biforn
With-outen hir, and ferd ful wel at ese?
Artow for hir and for non other born?
Hath kind thee wroughte al-only hir to plese?
Lat be, and thenk right thus in thy disese:
That, in the dees right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in love, ther com and goon plesaunces.

158. And yet this is a wonder most of alle,
Why thou thus sorwest, sin thou nost not yit,
Touching hir goinge, how that it shal falle,
Ne if she can hir-self distorben it.
Thou hast not yet assayed al hir wit.
A man may al by tyme his nekke bede
Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the nede.

159. For-thy take hede of that that I shal seye;
I have with hir y-spoke and longe y-be,
So as accorded was bitwixe us tweye.
And ever-mo me thinketh thus, that she
Hath som-what in hir hertes prevetee,
Wher-with she can, if I shal right arede,
Distorbe al this, of which thou art in drede.

160. For which my counseil is, whan it is night,
Thou to hir go, and make of this an ende;
And blisful Juno, thourgh hir grete mighte,
Shal, as I hope, hir grace un-to us sende.
Myn herte seyth, 'certeyn, she shal not wende';
And for-thy put thyn herte a whyle in reste;
And hold this purpos, for it is the beste.'

161. This Troilus answerde, and sighte sore,
'Thou seyst right wel, and I wil do right so';
And what him liste, he seyde un-to it more.
And whan that it was tyme for to go,
Ful prevely him-self, with-outen mo,
Un-to hir com, as he was wont to done;
And how they wroughte, I shal yow telle sone.

162. Soth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
So gan the peyne hir hertes for to twiste,
That neither of hem other mighte grete,
But hem in armes toke and after kiste.
The lasse wofulle of hem bothe niste
Wher that he was, ne mighte o word out-bringe,
As I seyde erst, for wo and for sobbinge.

163. Tho woful teres that they leten falle
As bittre weren, out of teres kinde,
For peyne, as is ligne-aloës or galle.
So bittre teres weep nought, as I finde,
The woful Myrra through the bark and rinde.
That in this world ther nis so hard an herte,
That nolde han rewed on hir peynes smerte.

164. But whan hir woful wery gostes tweyne
Retorned been ther-as hem oughte dwelle,
And that som-what to wayken gan the peyne
By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle
Of hire teres, and the herte unswelle,
With broken voys, al hoors for-shright, Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde:

165. 'O Jove, I deye, and mercy I beseche!
Help, Troilus!' and ther-with-al hir face
Upon his brest she leyde, and loste speche;
Hir woful spirit from his propre place,
Right with the word, alwey up poynt to pace.
And thus she lyth with hewes pale and grene,
That whylom fresh and fairest was to sene.

166. This Troilus, that on hir gan biholde,
Clepinge hir name, (and she lay as for deed,
With-oute answere, and felte hir limes colde,
Hir eyen throwen upward to hir heed),
This sorwful man can now noon other reed,
But ofte tyme hir colde mouth he kiste;
Wher him was wo, god and him-self it wiste!

167. He rist him up, and long streight he hir leyde;
For signe of lyf, for ought he can or may,
Can he noon finde in no-thing on Criseyde,
For which his song ful ofte is 'weylaway!'
But whan he saugh that specheles she lay,
With sorwful voys, and herte of blisse al bare,
He seyde how she was fro this world y-fare!

168. So after that he longe hadde hir compleyned,
His hondes wronge, and seyd that was to seye,
And with his teres salte hir brest bireyned,
He gan tho teres wypen of ful dreye,
And pitously gan for the soule preye,
And seyde, 'O lord, that set art in thy trone,
Rewe eek on me, for I shal folwe hir sone!'

169. She cold was and with-outen sentement,
For aught he woot, for breeth ne felte he noon;
And this was him a preignant argument
That she was forth out of this world agoon;
And whan he seigh ther was non other woon,
He gan hir limes dresse in swich manere
As men don hem that shul be leyd on bere.

170. And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerd a-noon out of his shethe he twighte,
Him-self to sleen, how sore that him smerte,
So that his sowle hir sowle folwen mighte,
Ther-as the doom of Mynos wolde it dighte;
Sin love and cruel Fortune it ne wolde,
That in this world he lenger liven sholde.

171. Thanne seyde he thus, fulfild of heigh desdayn,
'O cruel Jove, and thou, Fortune adverse,
This al and som, that falsly have ye slayn
Criseyde, and sin ye may do me no werse,
Fy on your might and werkes so diverse!
Thus cowardly ye shul me never winne;
Ther shal no deeth me fro my lady twinne.

172. For I this world, sin ye han slayn hir thus,
Wol lete, and folowe hir spirit lowe or hye;
Shal never lover seyn that Troilus
Dar not, for fere, with his lady dye;
For certeyn, I wol bere hir companye.
But sin ye wol not suffre us liven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben y-fere.

173. And thou, citee, whiche that I leve in wo,
And thou, Pryam, and bretheren al y-fere,
And thou, my moder, farewel! for I go;
And Attropos, make redy thou my bere!
And thou, Criseyde, o swete herte dere,
Receyve now my spirit!' wolde he seye,
With swerd at herte, al redy for to deye.

174. But as god wolde, of swough therwith she abreyde,
And gan to syke, and 'Troilus' she cryde;
And he answerde, 'lady myn Criseyde,
Live ye yet?' and leet his swerd doun glyde.
'Ye, herte myn, that thanked be Cupyde!'
Quod she, and ther-with-al she sore sighte;
And he bigan to glade hir as he mighte;

175. Took hir in armes two, and kiste hir ofte,
And hir to glade he dide al his entente;
For which hir goost, that flikered ay on-lofte,
In-to hir woful herte ayein it wente.
But at the laste, as that hir eyen gleute
A-syde, anoon she gan his swerd aspye,
As it lay bare, and gan for fere crye,

176. And asked him, why he it hadde out-drawe?
And Troilus anoon the cause hir tolde,
And how himself ther-with he wolde have slawe.
For which Criseyde up-on him gan biholde,
And gan him in hir armes faste folde,
And seyde, 'O mercy, god, lo, which a dede!
Allas! how neigh we were bothe dede!

177. Thanne if I ne hadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye wolde han slayn your-self anoon?' quod she.
'Ye, douteless'; and she answerde, 'allas!
For, by that ilke lord that made me,
I nolde a forlong wey on-lyve han be,
After your deeth, to han be crowned quene
Of al the lond the sonne on shyneth shene.

178. But with this selve swerd, which that here is,
My-selve I wolde have slayn!'—quod she tho;
'But ho, for we han right y-now of this,
And late us ryse and streight to bedde go,
And therë lat vs speken of our wo.
For, by the morter which that I see brenne,
Knowe I ful wel that day is not fer henne.'

179. Whan they were in hir bedde, in armes folde,
Nought was it lyk tho nightes here-biforn;
For pitously ech other gan biholde,
As they that hadden al hir blisse y-lorn,
Biwaylinge ay the day that they were born.
Til at the last this sorwful wight Criseyde
To Troilus these ilke wordes seyde:—

180. 'Lo, herte myn, wel wot ye this,' quod she,
'That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne,
And seketh nought how holpen for to be,
It nis but folye and encrees of peyne;
And sin that here assembled be we tweyne
To finde bote of wo that we ben inne,
It were al tyme sone to biginne.

181. I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot,
And as I am avysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow, whyl it is hoot.
Me thinketh thus, that neither ye nor I
Oughte half this wo to make skilfully.
For there is art y-now for to redresse
That yet is mis, and sleen this hevinesse.

182. Sooth is, the wo, the whiche that we ben inne,
For ought I woot, for no-thing elles is
But for the cause that we sholden twinne.
Considered al, ther nis no-more amis.
But what is thanne a remede un-to this,
But that we shape us sone for to mete?
This al and som, my dere herte swete.

183. Now that I shal wel bringen it aboute
To come ayein, sone after that I go,
Ther-of am I no maner thing in doute.
For dredeles, with-inne a wouke or two,
I shal ben here; and, that it may be so
By alle right, and in a wordes fewe,
I shal yow wel an heep of weyes shewe.

184. For which I wol not make long sermoun,
For tyme y-lost may not recovered be;
But I wol gon to my conclusioun,
And to the beste, in ought that I can see.
And, for the love of god, for-yeve it me
If I speke ought ayein your hertes reste;
For trewely, I speke it for the beste;

185. Makinge alwey a protestacioun,
That now these wordes, whiche that I shal seye,
Nis but to shewe yow my mocioun,
To finde un-to our helpe the beste weye;
And taketh it non other wyse, I preye.
For in effect what-so ye me comaunde,
That wol I doon, for that is no demaunde.

186. Now herkeneth this, ye han wel understonde,
My going graunted is by parlement
So ferforth, that it may not be with-stonde
For al this world, as by my jugement.
And sin ther helpeth noon avysement
To letten it, lat it passe out of minde;
And lat us shape a bettre wey to finde.

187. The sothe is, that the twinninge of us tweyne
Wol us disese and cruelliche anoye.
But him bihoveth som-tyme han a peyne,
That serveth love, if that he wol have joye.
And sin I shal no ferthere out of Troye
Than I may ryde ayein on half a morwe,
It oughte lasse causen us to sorwe:

188. So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe,
That day by day, myn owene herte dere,
Sin wel ye woot that it is now a truwe,
Ye shul ful wel al myn estat y-here.
And er that truwe is doon, I shal ben here,
And thanne have ye bothe Antenor y-wonne
And me also; beth glad now, if ye conne;

189. And thenk right thus, "Criseyde is now agoon,
But what! she shal come hastely ayeyn";
And whanne, allas? by god, lo, right anoon,
Er dayes ten, this dar I saufly seyn.
And thanne at erste shul we been so fayn,
So as we shulle to-gederes ever dwelle,
That al this world ne mighte our blisse telle.

190. I see that ofte, ther-as we ben now,
That for the beste, our conseil for to hyde,
Ye speke not with me, nor I with yow
In fourtenight; ne see yow go ne ryde.
May ye not ten dayes thanne abyde,
For myn honour, in swich an aventure?
Y-wis, ye mowen elles lyte endure!

191. Ye knowe eek how that al my kin is here,
But-if that onliche it my fader be;
And eek myn othere thinges alle y-fere,
And nameliche, my dere herte, ye,
Whom that I nolde leven for to see
For al this world, as wyd as it hath space;
Or elles, see ich never Joves face!

192. Why trowe ye my fader in this wyse
Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede
Lest in this toun that folkes me dispyse
By-cause of him, for his unhappy dede?
What woot my fader what lyf that I lede?
For if he wiste in Troye how wel I fare,
Us neded for my wending nought to care.

193. Ye seen that every day eek, more and more,
Men trete of pees; and it supposed is,
That men the quene Eleyne shal restore,
And Grekes us restore that is mis.
So though ther nere comfort noon but this,
That men purposen pees on every syde,
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.

194. For if that it be pees, myn herte dere,
The nature of the pees mot nedes dryve
That men moste entrecomunen y-fere,
And to and fro eek ryde and gon as blyve
Alday as thikke as been flen from an hyve;
And every wight han libertee to bleve
Wher-as him list the bet, with-outen leve.

195. And though so be that pees ther may be noon,
Yet hider, though ther never pees ne were,
I moste come; for whider sholde I goon,
Or how mischaunce sholde I dwelle there
Among tho men of armes ever in fere?
For which, as wisly god my soule rede,
I can not seen wher-of ye sholden drede.

196. Have here another wey, if it so be
That al this thing ne may yow not suffyse.
My fader, as ye knowen wel, pardee,
Is old, and elde is ful of coveityse.
And I right now have founden al the gyse,
With-oute net, wher-with I shal him hente;
And herkeneth how, if that ye wole assente.

197. Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is
The wolf ful, and the wether hool to have;
This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, y-wis,
Mot spenden part, the remenaunt for to save.
For ay with gold men may the herte grave
Of him that set is up-on coveityse;
And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse.

198. The moeble which that I have in this toun
Un-to my fader shal I take, and seye,
That right for trust and for savacioun
It sent is from a freend of his or tweye,
The whiche freendes ferventliche him preye
To senden after more, and that in hye,
Whyl that this toun stant thus in jupartye.

199. And that shal been an huge quantitee,
Thus shal I seyn, but, lest it folk aspyde,
This may be sent by no wight but by me;
I shal eek shewen him, if pees bityde,
What frendes that ich have on every syde
Toward the court, to doon the wrathe pace
Of Priamus, and doon him stonde in grace.

200. So, what for o thing and for other, swete,
I shal him so enchaunten with my sawes,
That right in hevene his sowle is, shal he mete!
For al Appollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculinge avayleth nought three hawes;
Desyr of gold shal so his sowle blende,
That, as me lyst, I shal wel make an ende.

201. And if he wolde ought by his sort it preve
If that I lye, in certayn I shal fonde
Distorben him, and plukke him by the sleve,
Makinge his sort, and beren him on honde,
He hath not wel the goddes understonde.
For goddes speken in amphibologyes,
And, for a sooth, they tellen twenty lyes.

202. Eek drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shal I seyn, and that his coward herte
Made him amis the goddes text to glose,
Whan he for ferde out of his Delphos sterte.
And but I make him sone to converte,
And doon my reed with-inne a day or tweye,
I wol to yow oblige me to deye.'

203. And treweliche, as writen wel I finde,
That al this thing was seyd of good entente;
And that hir herte trewe was and kinde
Towardes him, and spak right as she mente,
And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente,
And was in purpos ever to be trewe;
Thus writen they that of hir werkes knewe.

204. This Troilus, with herte and eres spradde,
Herde al this thing devysen to and fro;
And verraylich him semed that he hadde
The selve wit; but yet to lete her go
His herte misforyaf him ever-mo.
But fynally, he gan his herte wreste
To trusten hir, and took it for the beste.

205. For which the grete furie of his penaunce
Was queynt with hope, and ther-with hem bitwene
Bigan for joye the amorouse daunce.
And as the briddes, whan the sonne is shene,
Delyten in hir song in leves grene,
Right so the wordes that they spake y-fere
Delyted hem, and made hir hertes clere.

206. But natheles, the wending of Criseyde,
For al this world, may nought out of his minde;
For which ful ofte he pitously hir preyde,
That of hir heste he might hir trewe finde.
And seyde hir, 'certes, if ye be unkinde,
And but ye come at day set in-to Troye,
Ne shal I never have hele, honour, ne joye.

207. For al-so sooth as sonne up-rist on morwe,
And, god! so wisly thou me, woful wrecche,
To reste bringe out of this cruel sorwe,
I wol my-selven slee if that ye drecche.
But of my deeth though litel be to recche,
Yet, er that ye me cause so to smerte,
Dwel rather here, myn owene swete herte!

208. For trewely, myn owene lady dere,
Tho sleightes yet that I have herd yow stere
Ful shaply been to failen alle y-fere.
For thus men seyn, "that oon thenketh the bere,
But al another thenketh his ledere."
Your sire is wys, and seyd is, out of drede,
"Men may the wyse at-renne, and not at-rede."

209. It is ful hard to halten unespyed
Bifore a crepul, for he can the craft;
Your fader is in sleighte as Argus yëd;
For al be that his moeble is him biraft,
His olde sleighte is yet so with him laft,
Ye shal not blende him for your woman-hede,
Ne feyne a-right, and that is al my drede.

210. I noot if pees shal ever-mo bityde ;
But, pees or no, for ernest ne for game,
I woot, sin Calkas on the Grekes syde
Hath ones been, and lost so foule his name,
He dar no more come here ayein for shame ;
For which that weye, for ought I can espye,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasye.

211. Ye shal eek seen, your fader shal yow glose
To been a wyf, and as he can wel preche,
He shal som Greek so preyse and wel alose,
That ravisshen ye shal yow with his speche,
Or do yow doon by force as he shal teche.
And Troilus, of whom ye nil han routhe,
Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe !

212. And over al this, your fader shal despyse
Us alle, and seyn this citee nis but lorn ;
And that th'assege never shal aryse,
For-why the Grekes han it alle sworn
Til we be slayn, and doun our walles torn.
And thus he shal you with his wordes fere,
That ay drede I, that ye wol bleve there.

213. Ye shul eek seen so many a lusty knight
A-mong the Grekes, ful of worthinesse,
And eche of hem with herte, wit, and might
To plesen yow don al his besinesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of us sely Trojanes, but-if routhe
Remorde yow, or vertue of your trouthe.

214. And this to me so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende ;
Ne dredeles, in me ther may not sinke
A good opinioun, if that ye wende ;
For-why your faderes sleighte wol us shende.
And if ye goon, as I have told yow yore,
So thenk I nam but deed, with-oute more.

215. For which, with humble, trewe, and pitous herte,
A thousand tymes mercy I yow preye;
So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somwhat, as that I shal yow seye,
And lat us stele away bitwixe us tweye;
And thenk that folye is, whan man may chese,
For accident his substaunce ay to lese.

216. I mene this, that sin we mowe er day
Wel stele away, and been to-gider so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
In cas ye sholden to your fader go,
If that ye mighte come ayein or no?
Thus mene I, that it were a gret folye
To putte that sikernesse in jupartye.

217. And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
Of tresour, may we bothe with us lede
Y-nough to live in honour and plesaunce,
Til in-to tyme that we shul ben dede;
And thus we may eschewen al this drede.
For everich other wey ye can recorde,
Myn herte, y-wis, may not ther-with acorde.

218. And hardily, ne dredeth no poverte,
For I have kin and freendes elles-where
That, though we comen in our bare sherte,
Us sholde neither lakke gold ne gere,
But been honoured whyl we dwelten there.
And go we anoon, for, as in myn entente,
This is the beste, if that ye wole assente.'

219. Criseyde, with a syk, right in this wyse
Answerde, 'y-wis, my dere herte trewe,
We may wel stele away, as ye devyse,
And finde swiche unthrifty weyes newe;
But afterward, ful sore it wol us rewe.
And help me god so at my moste nede
As causeles ye suffren al this drede!

220. For thilke day that I for cherisshinge
Or drede of fader, or of other wight,
Or for estat delyt, or for weddinge
Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnes doughter, Juno, thorugh hir might,
As wood as Athamante do me dwelle
Eternaly in Stix, the put of helle!

221. And this on every god celestial
I swere it yow, and eek on eche goddesse,
On every Nymphe and deite infernal,
On Satiry and Fauny more and lesse,
That halve goddes been of wildernesse;
And Attropos my threed of lyf to-breste
If I be fals; now trowe me if thow leste!

222. And thou, Simoys, that as an arwe clere
Thorugh Troye rennest ay downward to the see,
Ber witnesse of this word that seyd is here,
That thilke day that ich untrewe be
To Troilus, myn owene herte free,
That thou retorne bakwarde to thy welle,
And I with body and soule sinke in helle!

223. But that ye speke, awey thus for to go
And leten alle your freendes, god forbede,
For any womman, that ye sholden so,
And namely, sin Troye hath now swich nede
Of help; and eek of o thing taketh hede,
If this were wist, my lif laye in balaunce,
And your honour; god shilde us fro mischaunce!

224. And if so be that pees her-after take,
As alday happeth, after anger, game,
Why, lord! the sorwe and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne dorste come ayein for shame!
And er that ye juparten so your name,
Beth nought to hasty in this hote fare;
For hasty man ne wanteth never care.

225. What trowe ye the peple eek al aboute
Wolde of it seye? It is ful light to arede.
They wolden seye, and swere it, out of doute,
That love ne droof yow nought to doon this dede,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede.
Thus were al lost, y-wis, myn herte dere,
Your honour, which that now shyneth so clere.

226. And also thenketh on myn honestee,
That floureth yet, how foule I sholde it shende,
And with what filthe it spotted sholde be,
If in this forme I sholde with yow wende.
Ne though I livede un-to the worldes ende,
My name sholde I never ayeinward winne;
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and sinne.

227. And for-thy slee with reson al this hete;
Men seyn, "the suffraunt overcometh," pardee;
Eek "who-so wol han leef, he leef mot lete";
Thus maketh vertue of necessitee
By pacience, and thenk that lord is he
Of fortune ay, that nought wol of hir recche;
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche.

228. And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Er Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Leoun passe out of this Ariete,
I wol ben here, with-outen any wene.
I mene, as helpe me Juno, hevenes quene,
The tenthe day, but-if that deeth me assayle,
I wol yow seen, with-outen any fayle.'

229. 'And now, so this be sooth,' quod Troilus,
'I shal wel suffre un-to the tenthe day,
Sin that I see that nede it moot be thus.
But, for the love of god, if it be may,
So lat us stele privelý away;
For ever in oon, as for to live in reste,
Myn herte seyth that it wol been the beste.'

230. 'O mercy, god, what lyf is this?' quod she;
'Allas, ye slee me thus for verray tene!
I see wel now that ye mistrusten me;
For by your wordes it is wel y-sene.
Now, for the love of Cynthia the shene,
Mistrust me not thus causeles, for routhe;
Sin to be trewe I have yow plight my trouthe.

231. And thenketh wel, that som tyme it is wit
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to winne;
Ne, pardee, lorn am I nought fro yow yit,
Though that we been a day or two a-twinne.
Dryf out the fantasyes yow with-inne;
And trusteth me, and leveth eek your sorwe,
Or here my trouthe, I wol not live til morwe.

232. For if ye wiste how sore it doth me smerte,
Ye wolde cesse of this; for god, thou wost,
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte,
To see yow wepen that I love most,
And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost.
Ye, nere it that I wiste remedye
To come ayein, right here I wolde dye!

233. But certes, I am not so nyce a wight
That I ne can imaginen a way
To come ayein that day that I have hight.
For who may holde thing that wol a-way?
My fader nought, for al his queynte pley.
And by my thrift, my wending out of Troye
Another day shal torne us alle to joye.

234. For-thy, with al myn herte I yow beseke,
If that yow list don ought for my preyere,
And for the love which that I love yow eke,
That er that I departe fro yow here,
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bringe at reste
Myn herte, which that is at point to breste.

235. And over al this, I pray yow,' quod she tho,
'Myn owene hertes soothfast suffisaunce,
Sin I am thyn al hool, with-outen mo,
That whyl that I am absent, no plesaunce
Of othere do me fro your remembraunce.
For I am ever a-gast, for-why men rede,
That "love is thing ay ful of bisy drede."

236. For in this world ther liveth lady noon,
If that ye were untrewe, as god defende!
That so bitraysed were or wo bigoon
As I, that alle trouthe in yow entende.
And douteles, if that ich other wende,
I nere but deed; and er ye cause finde,
For goddes love, so beth me not unkinde.'

237. To this answerde Troilus and seyde,
'Now god, to whom ther nis no cause y-wrye,
Me glade, as wis I never un-to Criseyde,
Sin thilke day I saw hir first with yë,
Was fals, ne never shal til that I dye.
At shorte wordes, wel ye may me leve;
I can no more, it shal be founde at preve.'

238. 'Graunt mercy, goode myn, y-wis,' quod she,
'And blisful Venus lat me never sterve
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degree
To quyte him wel, that so wel can deserve;
And whyl that god my wit wol me conserve,
I shal so doon, so trewe I have yow founde,
That ay honour to me-ward shal rebounde.

239. For trusteth wel, that your estat royal
Ne veyn delyt, nor only worthinesse
Of yow in werre, or torney marcial,
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eek richesse,
Ne made me to rewe on your distresse;
But moral vertue, grounded upon trouthe,
That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhe!

240. Eek gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despyt
Every thing that souned in-to badde,
As rudenesse and poeplish appetyt;
And that your reson brydled your delyt,
This made, aboven every creature,
That I was your, and shal, whyl I may dure.

241. And this may lengthe of yeres not for-do,
Ne remuable fortune deface;
But Juppiter, that of his might may do
The sorwful to be glad, so yeve us grace,
Er nightes ten, to meten in this place,
So that it may your herte and myn suffyse;
And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse.

242. And after that they longe y-pleyned hadde,
And ofte y-kist and streite in armes folde,
The day gan ryse, and Troilus him cladde,
And rewfulliche his lady gan biholde,
As he that felte dethes cares colde.
And to hir grace he gan him recomaunde;
Wher him was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

243. For mannes heed imaginen ne can,
Ne entendement considere, ne tonge telle
The cruel peynes of this sorwful man,
That passen every torment doun in helle.
For whan he saugh that she ne mighte dwelle,
Which that his soule out of his herte rente,
With-outen more, out of the chaumbre he wente.

Explicit Liber Quartus.

BOOK V

Incipit Liber Quintus.

1. Aprochen gan the fatal destinee
That Joves hath in disposicioun,
And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren three,
Committeth, to don execucioun;
For which Criseyde moste out of the toun,
And Troilus shal dwelle forth in pyne
Til Lachesis his threed no lenger twyne.—

2. The golden-tressed Phebus heighe on-lofte
Thryës hadde alle with his bemes shene
The snowes molte, and Zephirus as ofte
Y-brought ayein the tendre leves grene,
Sin that the sone of Ecuba the quene
Bigan to love hir first, for whom his sorwe
Was al, that she departe sholde a-morwe.

3. Ful redy was at pryme Dyomede,
Criseyde un-to the Grekes ost to lede,
For sorwe of which she felte hir herte blede,
As she that niste what was best to rede.
And trewely, as men in bokes rede,
Men wiste never womman han the care,
Ne was so looth out of a toun to fare.

4. This Troilus, with-outen reed or lore,
As man that hath his joyes eek forlore,
Was waytinge on his lady ever-more
As she that was the soothfast crop and more
Of al his lust, or joyes here-tofore.

But Troilus, now farewel al thy joye,
For shaltow never seen hir eft in Troye!

5. Soth is, that whyl he bood in this manere,
He gan his wo ful manly for to hyde,
That wel unnethe it seen was in his chere;
But at the yate ther she sholde oute ryde
With certeyn folk, he hoved hir t'abyde,
So wo bigoon, al wolde he nought him pleyne,
That on his hors unnethe he sat for peyne.

6. For ire he quook, so gan his herte gnawe,
Whan Diomede on horse gan him dresse,
And seyde un-to him-self this ilke sawe,
'Allas,' quod he, 'thus foul a wrecchednesse
Why suffre ich it, why nil ich it redresse?
Were it not bet at ones for to dye
Than ever-more in langour thus to drye?

7. Why nil I make at ones riche and pore
To have y-nough to done, er that she go?
Why nil I bringe al Troye upon a rore?
Why nil I sleen this Diomede also?
Why nil I rather with a man or two
Stele hir a-way? Why wol I this endure?
Why nil I helpen to myn owene cure?'

8. But why he nolde doon so fel a dede,
That shal I seyn, and why him liste it spare:
He hadde in herte alwey a maner drede,
Leste that Criseyde, in rumour of this fare,
Sholde han ben slayn; lo, this was al his care.
And elles, certeyn, as I seyde yore,
He hadde it doon, with-outen wordes more.

9. Criseyde, whan she redy was to ryde,
Ful sorwfully she sighte, and seyde 'allas!'
But forth she moot, for ought that may bityde,
And forth she rit ful sorwfully a pas.
Ther nis non other remedie in this cas.
What wonder is though that hir sore smerte,
Whan she forgoth hir owene swete herte?

10. This Troilus, in wyse of curteisye,
With hauke on hond, and with an huge route
Of knightes, rood and dide hir companye,
Passinge al the valey fer with-oute.
And ferther wolde han riden, out of doute,
Ful fayn, and wo was him to goon so sone;
But torne he moste, and it was eek to done.

11. And right with that was Antenor y-come
Out of the Grekes ost, and every wight
Was of it glad, and seyde he was welcome.
And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
He peyned him with al his fulle might
Him to with-holde of wepinge at the leste,
And Antenor he kiste, and made feste.

12. And ther-with-al he moste his leve take,
And caste his eye upon hir pitously,
And neer he rood, his cause for to make,
To take hir by the honde al sobrely.
And lord! so she gan wepen tendrely!
And he ful softe and sleighly gan hir seye,
'Now hold your day, and dooth me not to deye.'

13. With that his courser torned he a-boute
With face pale, and un-to Diomede
No word he spak, ne noon of al his route;
Of which the sone of Tydeus took hede,
As he that coude more than the crede
In swich a craft, and by the reyne hir hente;
And Troilus to Troye homwarde he wente.

14. This Diomede, that ladde hir by the brydel,
Whan that he saw the folk of Troye aweye,
Thoughte, 'al my labour shal not been on ydel,
If that I may, for somwhat shal I seye.
For at the worste it may yet shorte our weye.
I have herd seyd, eek tymes twyës twelve,
"He is a fool that wol for-yete himselve."'

15. But natheles this thoughte he wel ynough,
'That certaynly I am aboute nought
If that I speke of love, or make it tough;
For douteles, if she have in hir thought
Him that I gesse, he may not been y-brought
So sone awey; but I shal finde a mene,
That she not wite as yet shal what I mene.'

16. This Diomede, as he that coude his good,
Whan this was doon, gan fallen forth in speche
Of this and that, and asked why she stood
In swich disese, and gan hir eek biseche,
That if that he encrese mighte or eche
With any thing hir ese, that she sholde
Comaunde it him, and seyde he doon it wolde.

17. For trewely he swoor hir, as a knight,
That ther nas thing with whiche he mighte hir plese,
That he nolde doon his peyne and al his might
To doon it, for to doon hir herte an ese.
And preyede hir, she wolde hir sorwe apese,
And seyde, 'y-wis, we Grekes con have joye
To honouren yow, as wel as folk of Troye.'

18. He seyde eek thus, 'I woot, yow thinketh straunge,
No wonder is, for it is to yow newe,
Th'aqueintaunce of these Trojanes to chaunge,
For folk of Grece, that ye never knewe.
But wolde never god but-if as trewe
A Greek ye shulde among us alle finde
As any Trojan is, and eek as kinde.

19. And by the cause I swoor yow right, lo, now,
To been your freend, and helply, to my might,
And for that more acqueintaunce eek of yow
Have ich had than another straunger wight,
So fro this forth I pray yow, day and night,
Comaundeth me, how sore that me smerte,
To doon al that may lyke un-to your herte;

20. And that ye me wolde as your brother trete,
And taketh not my frendship in despyt;
And though your sorwes be for thinges grete,
Noot I not why, but out of more respyt,
Myn herte hath for to amende it greet delyt.
And if I may your harmes not redresse,
I am right sory for your hevinesse.

21. And though ye Trojans with us Grekes wrothe
Han many a day be, alwey yet, pardee,
O god of love in sooth we serven bothe.
And, for the love of god, my lady free,
Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth with me.
For trewely, ther can no wight yow serve,
That half so looth your wraththe wolde deserve.

22. And nere it that we been so neigh the tente
Of Calkas, which that seen us bothe may,
I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente;
But this enseled til another day.
Yeve me your hond, I am, and shal ben ay,
God help me so, whyl that my lyf may dure,
Your owene aboven every creature.

23. Thus seyde I never er now to womman born;
For god myn herte as wisly glade so,
I lovede never womman here-biforn
As paramours, ne never shal no mo.
And, for the love of god, beth not my fo;
Al can I not to yow, my lady dere,
Compleyne aright, for I am yet to lere.

24. And wondreth not, myn owene lady bright,
Though that I speke of love to you thus blyve;
For I have herd or this of many a wight,
Hath loved thing he never saugh his lyve.
Eek I am not of power for to stryve
Ayens the god of love, but him obeye
I wol alwey, and mercy I yow preye.

25. Ther been so worthy knightes in this place,
And ye so fair, that everich of hem alle
Wol peynen him to stonden in your grace.
But mighte me so fair a grace falle,
That ye me for your servaunt wolde calle,
So lowly ne so trewely you serve
Nil noon of hem, as I shal, til I sterve.'

26. Criseide un-to that purpos lyte answerde,
As she that was with sorwe oppressed so
That, in effect, she nought his tales herde,
But here and there, now here a word or two.
Hir thoughte hir sorwful herte brast a-two.
For whan she gan hir fader fer aspye,
Wel neigh doun of hir hors she gan to sye.

27. But natheles she thonked Diomede
Of al his travaile, and his goode chere,
And that him liste his friendship hir to bede;
And she accepteth it in good manere,
And wolde do fayn that is him leef and dere;
And trusten him she wolde, and wel she mighte,
As seyde she, and from hir hors she alighte.

28. Hir fader hath hir in his armes nome,
And tweynty tyme he kiste his doughter swete,
And seyde, 'O dere doughter myn, welcome!'
She seyde eek, she was fayn with him to mete,
And stood forth mewet, mildë, and mansuete.
But here I leve hir with hir fader dwelle,
And forth I wol of Troilus yow telle.

29. To Troye is come this woful Troilus.
In sorwe aboven alle sorwes smerte,
With felon look, and face dispitous.
Tho sodeinly doun from his hors he sterte,
And thorugh his paleys, with a swollen herte,
To chambre he wente; of no-thing took he hede,
Ne noon to him dar speke a word for drede.

30. And there his sorwes that he spared hadde
He yaf an issue large, and 'deeth!' he cryde;
And in his throwes frenetyk and madde
He cursed Jove, Appollo, and eek Cupyde,
He cursed Ceres, Bacus, and Cipryde,
His burthe, him-self, his fate, and eek nature,
And, save his lady, every creature.

31. To bedde he goth, and weyleth there and torneth
In furie, as dooth he, Ixion, in helle;
And in this wyse he neigh til day sojorneth.
But tho bigan his herte a lyte unswelle
Thorugh teres which that gonnen up to welle;
And pitously he cryde up-on Criseyde,
And to him-self right thus he spak, and seyde:—

32. 'Wher is myn owene lady lief and dere,
Wher is hir whyte brest, wher is it, where?
Wher been hir armes and hir eyen clere,
That yesternight this tyme with me were?
Now may I wepe allone many a tere,
And graspe aboute I may, but in this place,
Save a pilowe, I finde nought t'enbrace.

33. How shal I do? Whan shal she com ayeyn?
I noot, allas! why leet ich hir to go?
As wolde god, ich hadde as tho be sleyn!
O herte myn, Criseyde, O swete fo!
O lady myn, that I love and no mo!
To whom for ever-mo myn herte I dowe;
See how I deye, ye nil me not rescowe!

34. Who seeth yow now, my righte lode-sterre?
Who sit right now or stant in your presence?
Who can conforten now your hertes werre?
Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?
Who speketh for me right now in myn absence?
Allas, no wight; and that is al my care;
For wel wot I, as yvel as I ye fare.

35. How shulde I thus ten dayes ful endure,
Whan I the firste night have al this tene?
How shal she doon eek, sorwful creature?
For tendernesse, how shal she this sustene,
Swich wo for me? O pitous, pale, and grene
Shal been your fresshe wommanliche face
For langour, er ye torne un-to this place.'

36. And whan he fil in any slomeringes,
Anoon biginne he sholde for to grone,
And dremen of the dredfulleste thinges
That mighte been; as, mete he were allone
In place horrible, makinge ay his mone,
Or meten that he was amonges alle
His enemys, and in hir hondes falle.

37. And ther-with-al his body sholde sterte,
And with the stert al sodeinliche awake,
And swich a tremour fele aboute his herte,
That of the feer his body sholde quake;
And there-with-al he sholde a noyse make,
And seme as though he sholde falle depe
From heighe a-lofte; and than he wolde wepe,

38. And rewen on him-self so pitously,
That wonder was to here his fantasye.
Another tyme he sholde mightily
Conforte him-self, and seyn it was folye,
So causeles swich drede for to drye,
And eft biginne his aspre sorwes newe,
That every man mighte on his sorwes rewe.

39. Who coude telle aright or ful discryve
His wo, his pleynte, his langour, and his pyne?
Nought al the men that han or been on-lyve.
Thou, redere, mayst thy-self ful wel devyne
That swich a wo my wit can not defyne.
On ydel for to wryte it sholde I swinke,
Whan that my wit is wery it to thinke.

40. On hevene yet the sterres were sene,
Al-though ful pale y-waxen was the mone;
And whyten gan the orisonte shene
Al estward, as it woned is to done.
And Phebus with his rosy carte sone
Gan after that to dresse him up to fare,
Whan Troilus hath sent after Pandare.

41. This Pandare, that of al the day biforn
Ne mighte have comen Troilus to see,
Al-though he on his heed it hadde y-sworn,
For with the king Pryam alday was he,
So that it lay not in his libertee
No-wher to gon, but on the morwe he wente
To Troilus, whan that he for him sente.

42. For in his herte he coude wel devyne,
That Troilus al night for sorwe wook;
And that he wolde telle him of his pyne,
This knew he wel y-nough, with-oute book.
For which to chaumbre streight the wey he took,
And Troilus tho sobreliche he grette,
And on the bed ful sone he gan him sette.

43. 'My Pandarus,' quod Troilus, 'the sorwe
Which that I drye, I may not longe endure.
I trowe I shal not liven til to-morwe;
For whiche I wolde alwey, on aventure,
To thee devysen of my sepulture
The forme, and of my moeble thou dispone
Right as thee semeth best is for to done.

44. But of the fyr and flaumbe funeral
In whiche my body brenne shal to glede,
And of the feste and pleyes palestral
At my vigile, I pray thee take good hede
That al be wel; and offre Mars my stede,
My swerd, myn helm, and, leve brother dere,
My sheld to Pallas yef, that shyneth clere.

45. The poudre in which myn herte y-brend shal torne,
That preye I thee thou take and it conserve
In a vessel, that men clepeth an urne,
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus pitously I sterve,
So yeve it hir, and do me this plesaunce,
To preye hir kepe it for a remembraunce.

46. For wel I fele, by my maladye,
And by my dremes now and yore ago,
Al certeinly, that I mot nedes dye.
The owle eek, which that hight Ascaphilo,
Hath after me shright alle thise nightes two.
And, god Mercurie! of me now, woful wrecche,
The soule gyde, and, whan thee list, it fecche!'

47. Pandare answerde, and seyde, 'Troilus,
My dere freend, as I have told thee yore,
That it is folye for to sorwen thus,
And causeles, for whiche I can no-more.
But who-so wol not trowen reed ne lore,
I can not seen in him no remedye,
But lete him worthen with his fantasye.

48. But Troilus, I pray thee tel me now,
If that thou trowe, er this, that any wight
Hath loved paramours as wel as thou?
Ye, god wot, and fro many a worthy knight
Hath his lady goon a fourtenight,
And he not yet made halvendel the fare.
What nede is thee to maken al this care?

49. Sin day by day thou mayst thy-selven see
That from his love, or elles from his wyf,
A man mot twinnen of necessitee,
Ye, though he love hir as his owene lyf;
Yet nil he with him-self thus maken stryf.
For wel thow wost, my leve brother dere,
That alwey freendes may nought been y-fere.

50. How doon this folk that seen hir loves wedded
By freendes might, as it bi-tit ful ofte,
And seen hem in hir spouses bed y-bedded?
God woot, they take it wysly, faire and softe.
For-why good hope halt up hir herte on-lofte,
And for they can a tyme of sorwe endure;
As tyme hem hurt, a tyme doth hem cure.

51. So sholdestow endure, and late slyde
The tyme, and fonde to ben glad and light.
Ten dayes nis so long not t'abyde.
And sin she thee to comen hath bihight,
She nil hir hestes breken for no wight.
For dred thee not that she nil finden weye
To come ayein, my lyf that dorste I leye.

52. Thy swevenes eek and al swich fantasye
Dryf out, and lat hem faren to mischaunce;
For they procede of thy malencolye,
That doth thee fele in sleep al this penaunce.
A straw for alle swevenes signifiaunce!
God helpe me so, I counte hem not a bene,
Ther woot no man aright what dremes mene.

53. For prestes of the temple tellen this,
That dremes been the revelaciouns
Of goddes, and as wel they telle, y-wis,
That they ben infernals illusiouns;
And leches seyn, that of complexiouns
Proceden they, or fast, or glotonye.
Who woot in sooth thus what they signifye?

54. Eek othere seyn that thorugh impressiouns,
As if a wight hath faste a thing in minde,
That ther-of cometh swiche avisiouns;
And othere seyn, as they in bokes finde,
That, after tymes of the yeer by kinde,
Men dreme, and that th'effect goth by the mone;
But leve no dreem, for it is nought to done.

55. Wel worth of dremes ay thise olde wyves,
And treweliche eek augurie of thise foules;
For fere of which men wenen lese her lyves,
As ravenes qualm, or shryking of thise oules.
To trowen on it bothe fals and foul is.
Allas, allas, so noble a creature
As is a man, shal drede swich ordure!

56. For which with al myn herte I thee beseche,
Un-to thy-self that al this thou forgive;
And rys up now with-oute more speche,
And lat us caste how forth may best be drive
This tyme, and eek how freshly we may live
Whan that she cometh, the which shal be right sone;
God help me so, the beste is thus to done.

57. Rys, lat us speke of lusty lyf in Troye
That we han lad, and forth the tyme dryve;
And eek of tyme cominge us rejoye,
That bringen shal our blisse now so blyve;
And langour of these twyës dayes fyve
We shal ther-with so foryete or oppresse,
That wel unnethe it doon shal us duresse.

58. This toun is ful of lordes al aboute,
And trewes lasten al this mene whyle.
Go we pleye us in som lusty route
To Sarpedon, not hennes but a myle.
And thus thou shalt the tyme wel bigyle,
And dryve it forth un-to that blisful morwe,
That thou hir see, that cause is of thy sorwe.

59. Now rys, my dere brother Troilus;
For certes, it noon honour is to thee
To wepe, and in thy bed to jouken thus.
For trewely, of o thing trust to me,
If thou thus ligge a day, or two, or three,
The folk wol wene that thou, for cowardyse,
Thee feynest syk, and that thou darst not ryse.'

60. This Troilus answerde, 'O brother dere,
This knowen folk that han y-suffred peyne,
That though he wepe and make sorwful chere,
That feleth harm and smert in every veyne,
No wonder is; and though I ever pleyne,
Or alwey wepe, I am no-thing to blame,
Sin I have lost the cause of al my game.

61. But sin of fyne force I moot aryse,
I shal aryse, as sone as ever I may;
And god, to whom myn herte I sacrifyse,
So sende us hastely the tenthe day!
For was ther never fowl so fayn of May,
As I shal been, whan that she cometh in Troye,
That cause is of my torment and my joye.

62. But whider is thy reed,' quod Troilus,
'That we may pleye us best in al this toun?'
'By god, my conseil is,' quod Pandarus,
'To ryde and pleye us with king Sarpedoun.'
So longe of this they speken up and doun,
Til Troilus gan at the laste assente
To ryse, and forth to Sarpedoun they wente.

63. This Sarpedoun, as he that honourable
Was ever his lyve, and ful of heigh prowesse,
With al that mighte y-served been on table,
That deyntee was, al coste it greet richesse,
He fedde hem day by day, that swich noblesse,
As seyden bothe the moste and eek the leste,
Was never er that day wist at any feste.

64. Nor in this world ther is non instrument
Delicious, through wind, or touche, or corde,
As fer as any wight hath ever y-went,
That tonge telle or herte may recorde,
That at that feste it nas wel herd acorde;
Ne of ladies eek so fayr a companye
On daunce, er tho, was never y-seyn with yë.

65. But what avayleth this to Troilus,
That for his sorwe no-thing of it roughte?
For ever in oon his herte piëtous
Ful bisily Criseyde his lady soughte.
On hir was ever al that his herte thoughte.
Now this, now that, so faste imagininge,
That glade, y-wis, can him no festeyinge.

66. These ladies eek that at this feste been,
Sin that he saw his lady was a-weye,
It was his sorwe upon hem for to seen,
Or for to here on instrumentz so pleye.
For she, that of his herte berth the keye,
Was absent, lo, this was his fantasye,
That no wight sholde make melodye.

67. Nor ther nas houre in al the day or night,
Whan he was ther-as no wight mighte him here,
That he ne seyde, 'O lufsom lady bright,
How have ye faren, sin that ye were here?
Wel-come, y-wis, myn owene lady dere.'
But welaway, al this nas but a mase;
Fortune his howve entended bet to glase.

68. The lettres eek, that she of olde tyme
Hadde him y-sent, he wolde allone rede,
An hundred sythe, a-twixen noon and pryme;
Refiguringe hir shap, hir womanhede,
With-inne his herte, and every word and dede
That passed was, and thus he droof to an ende
The ferthe day, and seyde, he wolde wende.

69. And seyde, 'leve brother Pandarus,
Intendestow that we shul herë bleve
Til Sarpedoun wol forth congeyen us?
Yet were it fairer that we toke our leve.
For goddes love, lat us now sone at eve
Our leve take, and homward lat us torne;
For trewely, I nil not thus sojorne.'

70. Pandare answerde, 'be we comen hider
To fecchen fyr, and rennen hoom ayeyn?
God helpe me so, I can not tellen whider
We mighten goon, if I shal soothly seyn,
Ther any wight is of us more fayn
Than Sarpedoun; and if we hennes hye
Thus sodeinly, I holde it vilanye,

71. Sin that we seyden that we wolde bleve
With him a wouke; and now, thus sodeinly,
The ferthe day to take of him our leve,
He wolde wondren on it, trewely!
Lat us holde forth our purpos fermely;
And sin that ye bihighten him to byde,
Hold forward now, and after lat us ryde.'

72. Thus Pandarus, with alle peyne and wo,
Made him to dwelle; and at the woukes ende,
Of Sarpedoun they toke hir leve tho,
And on hir wey they spedden hem to wende.
Quod Troilus, 'now god me grace sende,
That I may finden, at myn hom-cominge,
Criseyde comen!' and ther-with gan he singe.

73. 'Ye, hasel-wode!' thoughte this Pandare,
And to him-self ful softely he seyde,
'God woot, refreyden may this hote fare
Er Calkas sende Troilus Criseyde!'
But natheles, he japed thus, and seyde,
And swor, y-wis, his herte him wel bihighte,
She wolde come as soon as ever she mighte.

74. Whan they un-to the paleys were y-comen
Of Troilus, they doun of hors alighte,
And to the chambre hir wey than han they nomen.
And in-to tyme that it gan to nighte,
They spaken of Crisëyde the brighte.
And after this, whan that hem bothe leste,
They spedde hem fro the soper un-to reste.

75. On morwe, as sone as day bigan to clere,
This Troilus gan of his sleep t'abreyde,
And to Pandare, his owene brother dere,
'For love of god,' ful pitously he seyde,
'As go we seen the paleys of Criseyde;
For sin we yet may have namore feste,
So lat us seen hir paleys at the leste.'

76. And ther-with-al, his meynee for to blende,
A cause he fond in toune for to go,
And to Criseydes hous they gonnen wende.
But lord! this sely Troilus was wo!
Him thoughte his sorweful herte braste a-two.
For whan he saugh hir dores sperred alle,
Wel neigh for sorwe a-doun he gan to falle.

77. Therwith whan he was war and gan biholde
How shet was every windowe of the place,
As frost, him thoughte, his herte gan to colde;
For which with chaunged deedlich pale face,
With-outen word, he forth bigan to pace;
And, as god wolde, he gan so faste ryde,
That no wight of his contenaunce aspyde.

78. Than seyde he thus, 'O paleys desolat,
O hous, of houses whylom best y-hight,
O paleys empty and disconsolat,
O thou lanterne, of which queynt is the light,
O paleys, whylom day, that now art night,
Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye,
Sin she is went that wont was us to gye!

79. O paleys, whylom croune of houses alle,
Enlumined with sonne of alle blisse!
O ring, fro which the ruby is out-falle,
O cause of wo, that cause hast been of lisse!
Yet, sin I may no bet, fayn wolde I kisse
Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route;
And fare-wel shryne, of whiche the seynt is oute!'

80. Ther-with he caste on Pandarus his yë
With chaunged face, and pitous to biholde ;
And whan he mighte his tyme aright aspye,
Ay as he rood, to Pandarus he tolde
His newe sorwe, and eek his joyes olde,
So pitously and with so dede an hewe,
That every wight mighte on his sorwe rewe.

81. Fro thennesforth he rydeth up and doun,
And every thing com him to remembraunce
As he rood forth by places of the toun
In whiche he whylom hadde al his plesaunce.
'Lo, yond saugh I myn owene lady daunce ;
And in that temple, with her eyen clere,
Me caughte first my righte lady dere.

82. And yonder have I herd ful lustily
My dere herte laugh, and yonder pleye
Saugh I hir ones eek ful blisfully.
And yonder ones to me gan she seye,
"Now goode swete, love me wel, I preye."
And yond so goodly gan she me biholde,
That to the deeth myn herte is to hir holde.

83. And at that corner, in the yonder hous,
Herde I myn alderlevest lady dere
So wommanly, with voys melodious,
Singen so wel, so goodly, and so clere,
That in my soule yet me thinketh I here
The blisful soun ; and, in that yonder place,
My lady first me took un-to hir grace.'

84. Thanne thoughte he thus, 'O blisful lord Cupyde,
Whanne I the proces have in my memorie,
How thou me hast werreyed on every syde,
Men mighte a book make of it, lyk a storie.
What nede is thee to seke on me victorie,
Sin I am thyn, and hoolly at thy wille?
What joye hastow thyn owene folk to spille?

85. Wel hastow, lord, y-wroke on me thyn ire,
Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greve!
Now mercy, lord, thou wost wel I desire
Thy grace most, of alle lustes leve.
And live and deye I wol in thy bileve;
For which I n'axe in guerdon but a bone,
That thou Criseyde ayein me sende sone.

86. Distreyne hir herte as faste to retorne
As thou dost myn to longen hir to see;
Than woot I wel, that she nil not sojorne.
Now, blisful lord, so cruel thou ne be
Un-to the blood of Troye, I preye thee,
As Juno was un-to the blood Thebane,
For which the folk of Thebes caughte hir bane.'

87. And after this he to the yates wente
Ther-as Criseyde out-rood a ful good paas,
And up and doun ther made he many a wente,
And to him-self ful ofte he seyde 'allas!
From hennes rood my blisse and my solas!
As wolde blisful god now, for his joye,
I mighte hir seen ayein come in-to Troye.

88. And to the yonder hille I gan hir gyde,
Allas! and there I took of hir my leve!
And yond I saugh hir to hir fader ryde,
For sorwe of which myn herte shal to-cleve.
And hider hoom I com whan it was eve;
And here I dwelle out-cast from alle joye,
And shal, til I may seen hir eft in Troye.'

89. And of him-self imagined he ofte
To ben defet, and pale, and waxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men seyde softe,
'What may it be? who can the sothe gesse
Why Troilus hath al this hevinesse?'
And al this nas but his malencolye,
That he hadde of him-self swich fantasye.

90. Another tyme imaginen he wolde
That every wight that wente by the weye
Had of him routhe, and that they seyen sholde,
'I am right sory Troilus wol deye.'
And thus he droof a day yet forth or tweye.
As ye have herd, swich lyf right gan he lede,
As he that stood bitwixen hope and drede.

91. For which him lyked in his songes shewe
Th'encheson of his wo, as he best mighte,
And make a song of wordes but a fewe,
Somwhat his woful herte for to lighte.
And whan he was from every mannes sighte,
With softe voys he, of his lady dere,
That was absent, gan singe as ye may here.

92. 'O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
With herte soor wel oughte I to bewayle,
That ever derk in torment, night by night,
Toward my deeth with wind in stere I sayle;
For which the tenthe night if that I fayle
The gyding of thy bemes brighte an houre,
My ship and me Caribdis wol devoure.'

93. This song when he thus songen hadde, sone
He fil ayein in-to his sykes olde;
And every night, as was his wone to done,
He stood the brighte mone to beholde,
And al his sorwe he to the mone tolde;
And seyde, 'y-wis, when thou art horned newe,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trewe!

94. I saugh thyn hornes olde eek by the morwe,
When hennes rood my righte lady dere,
That cause is of my torment and my sorwe;
For whiche, O brighte Lucina the clere,
For love of god, ren faste aboute thy spere!
For whan thyn hornes newe ginne springe,
Than shal she come, that may my blisse bringe!'

95. The day is more, and lenger every night,
Than they be wont to be, him thoughte tho;
And that the sonne wente his course unright
By lenger wey than it was wont to go;
And seyde, 'y-wis, me dredeth ever-mo,
The sonnes sone, Pheton, be on-lyve,
And that his fadres cart amis he dryve.'

96. Upon the walles faste eek wolde he walke,
And on the Grekes ost he wolde see,
And to him-self right thus he wolde talke,
'Lo, yonder is myn owene lady free,
Or elles yonder, ther tho tentes be!
And thennes comth this eyr, that is so sote,
That in my soule I fele it doth me bote.

97. And hardely this wind, that more and more
Thus stoundemele encreseth in my face,
Is of my ladyes depe sykes sore.
I preve it thus, for in non othere place
Of al this toun, save onliche in this space,
Fele I no wind that souneth so lyk peyne;
It seyth, "allas! why twinned be we tweyne?"'

98. This longe tyme he dryveth forth right thus,
Til fully passed was the nynthe night;
And ay bi-syde him was this Pandarus,
That bisily dide alle his fulle might
Him to comforte, and make his herte light;
Yevinge him hope alwey, the tenthe morwe
That she shal come, and stinten al his sorwe.

99. Up-on that other syde eek was Criseyde,
With wommen fewe, among the Grekes stronge;
For which ful ofte a day 'allas!' she seyde,
'That I was born! Wel may myn herte longe
After my deeth; for now live I to longe!
Allas! and I ne may it not amende;
For now is wors than ever yet I wende.

100. My fader nil for no-thing do me grace
To goon ayein, for nought I can him queme ;
And if so be that I my terme passe,
My Troilus shal in his herte deme
That I am fals, and so it may wel seme.
Thus shal I have unthank on every syde ;
That I was born, so weylawey the tyde !

101. And if that I me putte in jupartye,
To stele awey by nighte, and it bifalle
That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye ;
Or elles, lo, this drede I most of alle,
If in the hondes of som wrecche I falle,
I am but lost, al be myn herte trewe ;
Now mighty god, thou on my sorwe rewe !'

102. Ful pale y-waxen was hir brighte face,
Hir limes lene, as she that al the day
Stood whan she dorste, and loked on the place
Ther she was born, and ther she dwelt hadde ay.
And al the nighte wepinge, allas ! she lay.
And thus despeired, out of alle cure,
She ladde hir lyf, this woful creature.

103. Ful ofte a day she sighte eek for destresse,
And in hir-self she wente ay portrayinge
Of Troilus the grete worthinesse,
And alle his goodly wordes recordinge
Sin first that day hir love bigan to springe.
And thus she sette hir woful herte a-fyre
Thorugh remembraunce of that she gan desyre.

104. In al this world ther nis so cruel herte
That hir hadde herd compleynen in hir sorwe,
That nolde han wopen for hir peynes smerte,
So tendrely she weep, bothe eve and morwe.
Hir nededе no teres for to borwe.
And this was yet the worste of al hir peyne,
Ther was no wight to whom she dorste hir pleyne.

105. Ful rewfully she loked up-on Troye,
Biheld the toures heighe and eek the halles;
'Allas!' quod she, 'the plesaunce and the joye
The whiche that now al torned in-to galle is,
Have I had ofte with-inne yonder walles!
O Troilus, what dostow now,' she seyde;
'Lord! whether yet thou thenke up-on Criseyde?

106. Allas! I ne hadde trowed on your lore,
And went with yow, as ye me radde er this!
Thanne hadde I now not syked half so sore.
Who mighte have seyd, that I had doon a-mis
To stele awey with swich on as he is?
But al to late cometh the letuarie,
Whan men the cors un-to the grave carie.

107. To late is now to speke of this matere;
Prudence, allas! oon of thyn eyen three
Me lakked alwey, er that I cam here;
On tyme y-passed, wel remembred me;
And present tyme eek coude I wel y-see.
But futur tyme, er I was in the snare,
Coude I not seen; that causeth now my care.

108. But natheles, bityde what bityde,
I shal to-morwe at night, by est or weste,
Out of this ost stele on som maner syde,
And go with Troilus wher-as him leste.
This purpos wol I holde, and this is beste.
No fors of wikked tonges janglerye,
For ever on love han wrecches had envye.

109. For who-so wole of every word take hede,
Or rewlen him by every wightes wit,
Ne shal he never thryven, out of drede.
For that that som men blamen ever yit,
Lo, other maner folk commenden it.
And as for me, for al swich variaunce,
Felicitee clepe I my suffisaunce.

110. For which, with-outen any wordes mo,
To Troye I wol, as for conclusioun.'
But god it wot, er fully monthes two,
She was ful fer fro that entencioun.
For bothe Troilus and Troye toun
Shal knotteles through-out hir herte slyde;
For she wol take a purpos for t'abyde.

111. This Diomede, of whom yow telle I gan,
Goth now, with-inne him-self ay arguinge
With al the sleighte and al that ever he can,
How he may best, with shortest taryinge,
In-to his net Criseydes herte bringe.
To this entente he coude never fyne;
To fisshen hir, he leyde out hook and lyne.

112. But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte,
That she nas nat with-oute a love in Troye.
For never, sithen he hir thennes broughte,
Ne coude he seen her laughe or make joye.
He niste how best hir herte for t'acoye.
'But for t'assaye,' he seyde, 'it nought ne greveth;
For he that nought n'assayeth, nought n'acheveth.'

113. Yet seide he to him-self upon a night,
'Now am I not a fool, that woot wel how
Hir wo for love is of another wight,
And here-up-on to goon assaye hir now?
I may wel wite, it nil not been my prow.
For wyse folk in bokes it expresse,
"Men shal not wowe a wight in hevinesse."

114. But who-so mighte winnen swich a flour
From him, for whom she morneth night and day,
He mighte seyn, he were a conquerour.'
And right anoon, as he that bold was ay,
Thoughte in his herte, 'happe, how happe may,
Al sholde I deye, I wol hir herte seche;
I shal no more lesen but my speche.'

115. This Diomede, as bokes us declare,
Was in his nedes prest and corageous;
With sterne voys and mighty limes square,
Hardy, testif, strong, and chevalrous
Of dedes, lyk his fader Tideus.
And som men seyn, he was of tunge large;
And heir he was of Calidoine and Arge.

116. Criseyde mene was of hir stature,
Ther-to of shap, of face, and eek of chere,
Ther mighte been no fairer creature.
And ofte tyme this was hir manere,
To gon y-tressed with hir heres clere
Doun by hir coler at hir bak bihinde,
Which with a threde of gold she wolde binde.

117. And, save hir browes joyneden y-fere,
Ther was no lak, in ought I can espyen;
But for to speken of hir eyen clere,
Lo, trewely, they writen that hir syen,
That Paradys stood formed in hir yën.
And with hir riche beautee ever-more
Strof love in hir, ay which of hem was more.

118. She sobre was, eek simple, and wys with-al,
The beste y-norisshed eek that mighte be,
And goodly of hir speche in general,
Charitable, estatliche, lusty, and free;
Ne never-mo ne lakkede hir pitee;
Tendre-herted, slydinge of corage;
But trewely, I can not telle hir age.

119. And Troilus wel waxen was in hightе,
And complet formed by proporcioun
So wel, that kinde it not amenden mighte;
Yong, fresshe, strong, and hardy as lyoun;
Trewe as steel in ech condicioun;
On of the beste enteched creature,
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.

120. And certainly in storie it is y-founde,
That Troilus was never un-to no wight,
As in his tyme, in no degree secounde
In durring don that longeth to a knight.
Al mighte a geaunt passen him of might,
His herte ay with the firste and with the beste
Stod paregal, to durre don that him leste.

121. But for to tellen forth of Diomede :—
It fil that after, on the tenthe day,
Sin that Criseyde out of the citee yede,
This Diomede, as fresshe as braunche in May,
Com to the tente ther-as Calkas lay,
And feyned him with Calkas han to done ;
But what he mente, I shal yow telle sone.

122. Criseyde, at shorte wordes for to telle,
Welcomed him, and doun by hir him sette ;
And he was ethe y-nough to maken dwelle.
And after this, with-outen longe lette,
The spyces and the wyn men forth hem fette ;
And forth they speke of this and that y-fere,
As freendes doon, of which som shal ye here.

123. He gan first fallen of the werre in speche
Bitwixe hem and the folk of Troye toun ;
And of th'assege he gan hir eek byseche,
To telle him what was hir opinioun.
Fro that demaunde he so descendeth doun
To asken hir, if that hir straunge thoughte
The Grekes gyse, and werkes that they wroughte?

124. And why hir fader tarieth so longe
To wedden hir un-to som worthy wight?
Criseyde, that was in hir peynes stronge
For love of Troilus, hir owene knight,
As fer-forth as she conning hadde or might,
Answerde him tho ; but, as of his entente,
It semed not she wiste what he mente.

125. But natheles, this ilke Diomede
Gan in him-self assure, and thus he seyde,
'If ich aright have taken of yow hede,
Me thinketh thus, O lady myn, Criseyde,
That sin I first hond on your brydel leyde,
Whan ye out come of Troye by the morwe,
Ne coude I never seen yow but in sorwe.

126. Can I not seyn what may the cause be
But-if for love of som Troyan it were,
The which right sore wolde athinken me
That ye, for any wight that dwelleth there,
Sholden spille a quarter of a tere,
Or pitously your-selven so bigyle;
For dredelees, it is nought worth the whyle.

127. The folk of Troye, as who seyth, alle and some
In preson been, as ye your-selven see;
For thennes shal not oon on-lyve come
For al the gold bitwixen sonne and see.
Trusteth wel, and understondeth me,
Ther shal not oon to mercy goon on-lyve,
Al were he lord of worldes twyës fyve!

128. Swich wreche on hem, for fecching of Eleyne,
Ther shal be take, er that we hennes wende,
That Manes, which that goddes ben of peyne,
Shal been agast that Grekes wol hem shende.
And men shul drede, un-to the worldes ende,
From hennes-forth to ravisshe any quene,
So cruel shal our wreche on hem be sene.

129. And but-if Calkas lede us with ambages,
That is to seyn, with double wordes slye,
Swich as men clepe a "word with two visages,"
Ye shul wel knowen that I nought ne lye,
And al this thing right seen it with your yë,
And that anoon; ye nil not trowe how sone;
Now taketh heed, for it is for to done.

130. What wene ye your wyse fader wolde
Han yeven Antenor for yow anoon,
If he ne wiste that the citee sholde
Destroyed been? Why, nay, so mote I goon!
He knew ful wel ther shal not scapen oon
That Troyan is; and for the grete fere,
He dorste not, ye dwelte lenger there.

131. What wole ye more, lufsom lady dere?
Lat Troye and Troyan fro your herte pace!
Dryf out that bittre hope, and make good chere,
And clepe ayein the beautee of your face,
That ye with salte teres so deface.
For Troye is brought in swich a jupartye,
That, it to save, is now no remedye.

132. And thenketh wel, ye shal in Grekes finde
A more parfit love, er it be night,
Than any Troyan is, and more kinde,
And bet to serven yow wol doon his might.
And if ye vouche sauf, my lady bright,
I wol ben he to serven yow my-selve,
Ye, lever than be lord of Greces twelve!'

133. And with that word he gan to waxen reed,
And in his speche a litel wight he quook,
And caste a-syde a litel wight his heed,
And stinte a whyle; and afterward awook,
And sobreliche on hir he threw his look,
And seyde, 'I am, al be it yow no joye,
As gentil man as any wight in Troye.

134. For if my fader Tydeus,' he seyde,
'Y-lived hadde, I hadde been, er this,
Of Calidoine and Arge a king, Criseyde!
And so hope I that I shal yet, y-wis.
But he was slayn, allas! the more harm is,
Unhappily at Thebes al to rathe,
Polymites and many a man to scathe.

135. But herte myn, sin that I am your man,
And been the ferste of whom I seche grace,
To serven you as hertely as I can,
And ever shal, whyl I to live have space,
So, er that I departe out of this place,
Ye wol me graunte, that I may to-morwe,
At bettre leyser, telle yow my sorwe.'

136. What shold I telle his wordes that he seyde?
He spak y-now, for o day at the meste;
It preveth wel, he spak so that Criseyde
Graunted, on the morwe, at his requeste,
For to speken with him at the leste,
So that he nolde speke of swich matere;
And thus to him she seyde, as ye may here:

137. As she that hadde hir herte on Troilus
So faste, that ther may it noon arace;
And straungely she spak, and seyde thus:
'O Diomede, I love that ilke place
Ther I was born; and Joves, for his grace,
Delivere it sone of al that doth it care!
God, for thy might, so leve it wel to fare!

138. That Grekes wolde hir wraththe on Troye wreke,
If that they mighte, I knowe it wel, y-wis.
But it shal not bifallen as ye speke;
And god to-forn, and ferther over this,
I wot my fader wys and redy is;
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde,
So dere, I am the more un-to him holde.

139. That Grekes been of heigh condicioun,
I woot eek wel; but certein, men shal finde
As worthy folk with-inne Troye toun,
As conning, and as parfit and as kinde,
As been bitwixen Orcades and Inde.
And that ye coude wel your lady serve,
I trowe eek wel, hir thank for to deserve.

140. But as to speke of love, y-wis,' she seyde,
'I hadde a lord, to whom I wedded was,
The whos myn herte al was, til that he deyde;
And other love, as helpe me now Pallas,
Ther in myn herte nis, ne never was.
And that ye been of noble and heigh kinrede,
I have wel herd it tellen, out of drede.

141. And that doth me to han so gret a wonder,
That ye wol scornen any womman so.
Eek, god wot, love and I be fer a-sonder;
I am disposed bet, so mote I go,
Un-to my deeth, to pleyne and maken wo.
What I shal after doon, I can not seye;
But trewely, as yet me list not pleye.

142. Myn herte is now in tribulacioun,
And ye in armes bisy, day by day.
Here-after, whan ye wonnen han the toun,
Paraunter, thanne so it happen may,
That whan I see that I never er say,
Than wole I werke that I never wroughte!
This word to yow y-nough suffysen oughte.

143. To-morwe eek wol I speke with yow fayn,
So that ye touchen nought of this matere.
And whan yow list, ye may come here ayeyn;
And, er ye gon, thus muche I seye yow here:
As helpe me Pallas with hir heres clere,
If that I sholde of any Greek han routhe,
It sholde be your-selven, by my trouthe!

144. I sey not therfore that I wol yow love,
Ne I sey not nay, but in conclusioun,
I mene wel, by god that sit above':—
And ther-with-al she caste hir eyen doun,
And gan to syke, and seyde, 'O Troye toun,
Yet bidde I god, in quiete and in reste
I may yow seen, or do myn herte breste.'

145. But in effect, and shortly for to seye,
This Diomede al freshly newe ayeyn
Gan pressen on, and faste hir mercy preye;
And after this, the sothe for to seyn,
Hir glove he took, of which he was ful fayn.
And fynally, when it was waxen eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.

146. The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte
The wey, ther brode Phebus doun alighte;
And Cynthea hir char-hors over-raughte
To whirle out of the Lyon, if she mighte;
And Signifer his candeles shewed brighte,
Whan that Criseyde un-to hir bedde wente
In-with hir fadres faire brighte tente.

147. Retorning in hir soule ay up and doun
The wordes of this sodein Diomede,
His greet estat, and peril of the toun,
And that she was allone and hadde nede
Of freendes help; and thus bigan to brede
The cause why, the sothe for to telle,
That she tok fully purpos for to dwelle.

148. The morwe com, and goostly for to speke,
This Diomede is come un-to Criseyde,
And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
So wel he for him-selve spak and seyde,
That alle hir sykes sore adoun he leyde.
And fynally, the sothe for to seyne,
He refte hir of the grete of al hir peyne.

149. And after this the story telleth us,
That she him yaf the faire baye stede,
The which he ones wan of Troilus;
And eek a broche (and that was litel nede)
That Troilus was, she yaf this Diomede.
And eek, the bet from sorwe him to releve,
She made him were a pencel of hir sleve.

150. I finde eek in the stories elles-where,
Whan through the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho weep she many a tere,
Whan that she saugh his wyde woundes blede ;
And that she took to kepen him good hede,
And for to hele him of his sorwes smerte.
Men seyn, I not, that she yaf him hir herte.

151. But trewely, the story telleth us,
Ther made never womman more wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.
She seyde, 'allas ! for now is clene a-go
My name of trouthe in love, for ever-mo !
For I have falsed oon, the gentileste
That ever was, and oon the worthieste !

152. Allas, of me, un-to the worldes ende,
Shal neither been y-written nor y-songe
No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende,
O, rolled shal I been on many a tonge !
Through-out the world my belle shal be ronge ;
And wommen most wol hate me of alle.
Allas, that swich a cas me sholde falle !

153. They wol seyn, in as muche as in me is,
I have hem doon dishonour, weylawey !
Al be I not the firste that dide amis,
What helpeth that to do my blame awey ?
But sin I see there is no bettre way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomede algate I wol be trewe.

154. But Troilus, sin I no better may,
And sin that thus departen ye and I,
Yet preye I god, so yeve yow right good day
As for the gentileste, trewely,
That ever I say, to serven feithfully,
And best can ay his lady honour kepe' :—
And with that word she brast anon to wepe.

155. 'And certes, yow ne haten shal I never,
And freendes love, that shal ye han of me,
And my good word, al mighte I liven ever.
And, trewely, I wolde sory be
For to seen yow in adversitee.
And giltelees, I woot wel, I yow leve;
But al shal passe; and thus take I my leve.'

156. But trewely, how longe it was bitwene,
That she for-sook him for this Diomede,
Ther is non auctor telleth it, I wene.
Take every man now to his bokes hede;
He shal no terme finden, out of drede.
For though that he bigan to wowe hir sone,
Er he hir wan, yet was ther more to done.

157. Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
Ferther than the story wol devyse.
Hir name, allas! is publisshed so wyde,
That for hir gilt it oughte y-now suffyse.
And if I mighte excuse hir any wyse,
For she so sory was for hir untrouthe,
Y-wis, I wolde excuse hir yet for routhe.

158. This Troilus, as I biforn have told,
Thus dryveth forth, as wel as he hath might.
But often was his herte hoot and cold,
And namely, that ilke nynthe night,
Which on the morwe she hadde him byhight
To come ayein: god wot, ful litel reste
Hadde he that night; no-thing to slepe him leste.

159. The laurer-crouned Phebus, with his hete,
Gan, in his course ay upward as he wente,
To warmen of th' est see the wawes wete;
And Nisus doughter song with fresh entente,
Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente;
And on the walles of the toun they pleyde,
To loke if they can seen ought of Criseyde.

160. Til it was noon, they stoden for to see
Who that ther come; and every maner wight,
That cam fro fer, they seyden it was she,
Til that they coude knowen him a-right,
Now was his herte dul, now was it light;
And thus by-japed stonden for to stare
Aboute nought, this Troilus and Pandare.

161. To Pandarus this Troilus tho seyde,
'For ought I wot, bi-for noon, sikerly,
In-to this toun ne comth nought here Criseyde.
She hath y-now to done, hardily,
To winnen from hir fader, so trowe I;
Hir olde fader wol yet make hir dyne
Er that she go; god yeve his herte pyne!'

162. Pandare answerde, 'it may wel be, certeyn;
And for-thy lat us dyne, I thee biseche;
And after noon than mayst thou come ayeyn.'
And hoom they go, with-oute more speche;
And comen ayein, but longe may they seche
Er that they finde that they after cape;
Fortune hem bothe thenketh for to jape.

163. Quod Troilus, 'I see wel now, that she
Is taried with hir olde fader so,
That er she come, it wol neigh even be.
Com forth, I wol un-to the yate go.
Thise portours been unkonninge ever-mo;
And I wol doon hem holden up the yate
As nought ne were, al-though she come late.'

164. The day goth faste, and after that comth eve,
And yet com nought to Troilus Criseyde.
He loketh forth by hegge, by tree, by greve,
And fer his heed over the wal he leyde.
And at the laste he torned him, and seyde,
By god, I woot hir mening now, Pandare!
'Al-most, y-wis, al newe was my care.

165. Now douteles, this lady can hir good ;
I woot, she meneth ryden prively.
I comende hir wysdom, by myn hood !
She wol not maken peple nycely
Gaure on hir, whan she comth ; but softely
By nighte in-to the toun she thenketh ryde.
And, dere brother, thenk not longe t'abyde.

166. We han nought elles for to doon, y-wis.
And Pandarus, now woltow trowen me?
Have here my trouthe, I see hir ! yond she is.
Heve up thyn eyen, man ! maystow not see?'
Pandare answerde, 'nay, so mote I thee !
Al wrong, by god ; what seystow, man, wher art?
That I see yond nis but a fare-cart.'

167. 'Allas, thou seist right sooth,' quod Troilus ;
'But hardely, it is not al for nought
That in myn herte I now rejoyse thus.
It is ayein som good I have a thought.
Noot I not how, but sin that I was wrought,
Ne felte I swich a confort, dar I seye ;
She comth to-night, my lyf, that dorste I leye !'

168. Pandare answerde, 'it may be wel, y-nough';
And held with him of al that ever he seyde ;
But in his herte he thoughte, and softe lough,
And to him-self ful sobrely he seyde :
'From hasel-wode, ther Joly Robin pleyde,
Shal come al that that thou abydest here ;
Ye, fare-wel al the snow of ferne yere !'

169. The wardein of the yates gan to calle
The folk which that with-oute the yates were,
And bad hem dryven in hir bestes alle,
Or al the night they moste bleven there.
And fer with-in the night, with many a tere,
This Troilus gan hoomward for to ryde ;
For wel he seeth it helpeth nought t'abyde.

170. But natheles, he gladded him in this;
He thoughte he misacounted hadde his day,
And seyde, 'I understonde have al a-mis.
For thilke night I last Criseyde say,
She seyde, "I shal ben here, if that I may,
Er that the mone, O dere herte swete!
The Lyon passe, out of this Ariete."

171. For which she may yet holde al hir biheste.'
And on the morwe un-to the yate he wente,
And up and down, by west and eek by este,
Up-on the walles made he many a wente.
But al for nought; his hope alwey him blente;
For which at night, in sorwe and sykes sore
He wente him hoom, with-outen any more.

172. This hope al clene out of his herte fledde,
He nath wher-on now lenger for to honge;
But for the peyne him thoughte his herte bledde,
So were his throwes sharpe and wonder stronge.
For when he saugh that she abood so longe,
He niste what he juggen of it mighte,
Sin she hath broken that she him bihighte.

173. The thridde, ferthe, fifte, sixte day
After tho dayes ten, of which I tolde,
Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet som-what trustinge on hir hestes olde.
But whan he saugh she nolde hir terme holde,
He can now seen non other remedye,
But for to shape him sone for to dye.

174. Ther-with the wikked spirit, god us blesse,
Which that men clepeth wode jalousye,
Gan in him crepe, in al this hevinesse;
For which, by-cause he wolde sone dye,
He ne eet ne dronk, for his malencolye,
And eek from every companye he fledde;
This was the lyf that al the tyme he ledde.

175. He so defet was, that no maner man
Unnethe mighte him knowe ther he wente;
So was he lene, and ther-to pale and wan,
And feble, that he walketh by potente;
And with his ire he thus him-selven shente.
And who-so axed him wher-of him smerte,
He seyde, his harm was al aboute his herte.

176. Pryam ful ofte, and eek his moder dere,
His bretheren and his sustren gonne him freyne
Why he so sorwful was in al his chere,
And what thing was the cause of al his peyne?
But al for nought; he nolde his cause pleyne,
But seyde, he felte a grevous maladye
A-boute his herte, and fayn he wolde dye.

177. So on a day he leyde him doun to slepe,
And so bifel that in his sleep him thoughte,
That in a forest faste he welk to wepe
For love of hir that him these peynes wroughte;
And up and doun as he the forest soughte,
He mette he saugh a boor with tuskes grete,
That sleep ayein the bright sonnes hete.

178. And by this boor, faste in his armes folde,
Lay kissing ay his lady bright Criseyde:
For sorwe of which, whan he it gan biholde,
And for despyt, out of his slepe he breyde,
And loude he cryde on Pandarus, and seyde,
'O Pandarus, now knowe I crop and rote!
I nam but deed, ther nis non other bote!

179. My lady bright Criseyde hath me bitrayed,
In whom I trusted most of any wight,
She elles-where hath now hir herte apayed;
The blisful goddes, through hir grete might,
Han in my dreem y-shewed it ful right.
Thus in my dreem Criseyde I have biholde'—
And al this thing to Pandarus he tolde.

180. 'O my Criseyde, allas! what subtiltee,
What newe lust, what beautee, what science,
What wratthe of juste cause have ye to me?
What gilt of me, what fel experience
Hath fro me raft, allas! thyn advertence?
O trust, O feyth, O depe asëuraunce,
Who hath me reft Criseyde, al my plesaunce?

181. Allas! why leet I you from hennes go,
For which wel neigh out of my wit I breyde?
Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
God wot I wende, O lady bright, Criseyde,
That every word was gospel that ye seyde!
But who may bet bigylen, if him liste,
Than he on whom men weneth best to triste?

182. What shal I doon, my Pandarus, allas!
I fele now so sharpe a newe peyne,
Sin that ther is no remedie in this cas,
That bet were it I with myn hondes tweyne
My-selven slow, than alwey thus to pleyne.
For through my deeth my wo sholde han an ende,
Ther every day with lyf my-self I shende.'

183. Pandare answerde and seyde, 'allas the whyle
That I was born; have I not seyd er this,
That dremes many a maner man bigyle?
And why? for folk expoun̄den hem a-mis.
How darstow seyn that fals thy lady is,
For any dreem, right for thyn owene drede?
Lat be this thought, thou canst no dremes rede.

184. Paraunter, ther thou dremest of this boor,
It may so be that it may signifye
Hir fader, which that old is and eek hoor,
Ayein the sonne lyth, on poynt to dye,
And she for sorwe ginneth wepe and crye,
And kisseth him, ther he lyth on the grounde;
Thus shuldestow thy dreem a-right expounde.'

185. 'How mighte I thanne do?' quod Troilus,
'To knowe of this, ye, were it never so lyte?'
'Now seystow wy-ly,' quod this Pandarus.
'My reed is this, sin thou canst wel endyte,
That hastely a lettre thou hir wryte,
Thorugh which thou shalt wel bringen it aboute,
To knowe a sooth of that thou art in doute.

186. And see now why; for this I dar wel seyn,
That if so is that she untrewe be,
I can not trowe that she wol wryte ayeyn.
And if she wryte, thou shalt ful sone see,
As whether she hath any libertee
To come ayein, or elles in som clause,
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause.

187. Thou hast not writen hir sin that she wente,
Nor she to thee, and this I dorste leye,
Ther may swich cause been in hir entente,
That hardely thou wolt thy-selven seye,
That hir a-bood the beste is for yow tweye.
Now wryte hir thanne, and thou shalt fele sone
A sothe of al; ther is no more to done.'

188. Acorded been to this conclusioun,
And that anoon, these ilke lordes two;
And hastely sit Troilus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte to and fro,
How he may best discryven hir his wo.
And to Criseyde, his owene lady dere,
He wroot right thus, and seyde as ye may here.

189. 'Right fresshe flour, whos I have been and shal,
With-outen part of elles-where servyse,
With herte, body, lyf, lust, thought, and al;
I, woful wight, in every humble wyse
That tonge telle or herte may devyse,
As ofte as matere occupyeth place,
Me recomaunde un-to your noble grace.

190. Lyketh it yow to witen, swete herte,
As ye wel knowe how longe tyme agoon
That ye me lafte in aspre peynes smerte,
Whan that ye wente, of which yet bote noon
Have I non had, but ever wers bigoon
Fro day to day am I, and so mot dwelle,
While it yow list, of wele and wo my welle!

191. For which to yow, with dredful herte trewe,
I wryte, as he that sorwe dryfth to wryte,
My wo, that every houre encreseth newe,
Compleyninge as I dar or can endyte.
And that defaced is, that may ye wyte
The teres, which that fro myn eyen reyne,
That wolde speke, if that they coude, and pleyne.

192. Yow first biseche I, that your eyen clere
To look on this defouled ye not holde;
And over al this, that ye, my lady dere,
Wol vouche-sauf this lettre to biholde.
And by the cause eek of my cares colde,
That sleeth my wit, if ought amis me asterte,
For-yeve it me, myn owene swete herte.

193. If any servant dorste or oughte of right
Up-on his lady pitously compleyne,
Than wene I, that ich oughte be that wight,
Considered this, that ye these monthes tweyne
Han taried, ther ye seyden, sooth to seyne,
But dayes ten ye nolde in ost sojourne,
But in two monthes yet ye not retourne.

194. But for-as-muche as me mot nedes lyke
Al that yow list, I dar not pleyne more,
But humblely with sorwful sykes syke;
Yow wryte ich myn unresty sorwes sore,
Fro day to day desyring ever-more
To knowen fully, if your wil it were,
How ye han ferd and doon, whyl ye be there.

195. The whos wel-fare and hele eek god encresse
In honour swich, that upward in degree
It growe alwey, so that it never cesse;
Right as your herte ay can, my lady free,
Devyse, I prey to god so mote it be.
And graunte it that ye sone up-on me rewe
As wisly as in al I am yow trewe.

196. And if yow lyketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whos wo ther may no wight discryve,
I can no more but, cheste of every care,
At wrytinge of this lettre I was on-lyve,
Al redy out my woful gost to dryve;
Which I delaye, and holde him yet in honde,
Upon the sight of matere of your sonde.

197. Myn eyen two, in veyn with which I see,
Of sorweful teres salte arn waxen welles;
My song, in pleynte of myn adversitee;
My good in harm; myn ese eek waxen helle is.
My joye, in wo; I can sey yow nought elles,
But turned is, for which my lyf I warie,
Everich joye or ese in his contrarie.

198. Which with your cominge hoom ayein to Troye
Ye may redresse, and more a thousand sythe
Than ever ich hadde, encresen in me joye.
For was ther never herte yet so blythe
To han his lyf, as I shal been as swythe
As I yow see; and, though no maner routhe
Commeve yow, yet thinketh on your trouthe.

199. And if so be my gilt hath deeth deserved,
Or if you list no more up-on me see,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served,
Biseche I yow, myn hertes lady free,
That here-upon ye wolden wryte me,
For love of god, my righte lode-sterre,
Ther deeth may make an ende of al my werre.

200. If other cause aught doth yow for to dwelle,
That with your lettre ye me recomforte ;
For though to me your absence is an helle,
With pacience I wol my wo comporte,
And with your lettre of hope I wol desporte.
Now wryteth, swete, and lat me thus not pleyne ;
With hope, or deeth, delivereth me fro peyne.

201. Y-wis, myn owene dere herte trewe,
I woot that, whan ye next up-on me see,
So lost have I myn hele and eek myn hewe,
Criseyde shal nought conne knowe me !
Y-wis, myn hertes day, my lady free,
So thursteth ay myn herte to biholde
Your beautee, that my lyf unnethe I holde.

202. I sey no more, al have I for to seye
To you wel more than I telle may ;
But whether that ye do me live or deye,
Yet pray I god, so yeve yow right good day.
And fareth wel, goodly fayre fresshe may,
As ye that lyf or deeth me may comaunde ;
And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde

203. With hele swich that, but ye yeven me
The same hele, I shal noon hele have.
In you lyth, whan yow list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shal my grave.
In yow my lyf, in yow might for to save
Me from disese of alle peynes smerte ;
And fare now wel, myn owene swete herte !
Le vostre T.'

204. This lettre forth was sent un-to Criseyde,
Of which hir answere in effect was this ;
Ful pitously she wroot ayein, and seyde,
That al-so sone as that she might, y-wis,
She wolde come, and mende al that was mis.
And fynally she wroot and seyde him thanne,
She wolde come, ye, but she niste whanne.

205. But in hir lettre made she swich festes,
That wonder was, and swereth she loveth him best,
Of which he fond but botmelees bihestes.
But Troilus, thou mayst now, est or west,
Pype in an ivy leef, if that thee lest;
Thus gooth the world; god shilde us fro mischaunce,
And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce!

206. Encresen gan the wo fro day to night
Of Troilus, for taryinge of Criseyde;
And lessen gan his hope and eek his might,
For which al doun he in his bed him leyde;
He ne eet, ne dronk, ne sleep, ne word he seyde,
Imagininge ay that she was unkinde;
For which wel neigh he wex out of his minde.

207. This dreem, of which I told have eek biforn,
May never come out of his remembraunce;
He thoughte ay wel he hadde his lady lorn,
And that Joves, of his purveyaunce,
Him shewed hadde in sleep the signifiaunce
Of hir untrouthe and his disaventure,
And that the boor was shewed him in figure.

208. For which he for Sibille his suster sente,
That called was Cassandre eek al aboute;
And al his dreem he tolde hir er he stente,
And hir bisoughte assoilen him the doute
Of the stronge boor, with tuskes stoute;
And fynally, with-inne a litel stounde,
Cassandre him gan right thus his dreem expounde.

209. She gan first smyle, and seyde, 'O brother dere,
If thou a sooth of this desyrest knowe,
Thou most a fewe of olde stories here,
To purpos, how that fortune over-throwe
Hath lordes olde; through which, with-inne a throwe,
Thou wel this boor shalt knowe, and of what kinde
He comen is, as men in bokes finde.

210. Diane, which that wrooth was and in ire
For Grekes nolde doon hir sacrifyse,
Ne encens up-on hir auter sette a-fyre,
She, for that Grekes gonne hir so dispyse,
Wrak hir in a wonder cruel wyse.
For with a boor as greet as oxe in stalle
She made up frete hir corn and vynes alle.

211. To slee this boor was al the contree reysed,
A-monges which ther com, this boor to see,
A mayde, oon of this world the best y-preysed;
And Meleagre, lord of that contree,
He lovede so this fresshe mayden free
That with his manhood, er he wolde stente,
This boor he slow, and hir the heed he sente;

212. Of which, as olde bokes tellen us,
Ther roos a contek and a greet envye;
And of this lord descended Tydeus
By ligne, or elles olde bokes lye;
But how this Meleagre gan to dye
Thorugh his moder, wol I yow not telle,
For al to long it were for to dwelle.'

[*Argument of the* 12 *Books of Statius' 'Thebais.'*]

Associat profugum Tideo *primus* Polimitem;
Tidea legatum docet insidiasque *secundus;*
Tercius Hemoniden canit et vates latitantes;
Quartus habet reges ineuntes prelia septem;
Mox furie Lenne *quinto* narratur et anguis;
Archimori bustum *sexto* ludique leguntur;
Dat Graios Thebes et vatem *septimus* vmbris;
Octauo cecidit Tideus, spes, vita Pelasgis;
Ypomedon *nono* moritur cum Parthonopeo;
Fulmine percussus, *decimo* Capaneus superatur;
Vndecimo sese perimunt per vulnera fratres;
Argiuam flentem narrat *duodenus* et ignem.

213. She toldë eek how Tydeus, er she stente,
Un-to the stronge citee of Thebes,
To cleyme kingdom of the citee, wente,
For his felawe, daun Polymites,
Of which the brother, daun Ethyocles,
Ful wrongfully of Thebes held the strengthe;
This tolde she by proces, al by lengthe.

214. She tolde eek how Hemonides asterte,
Whan Tydeus slough fifty knightes stoute.
She tolde eek al the prophesyes by herte,
And how that sevene kinges, with hir route,
Bisegeden the citee al aboute;
And of the holy serpent, and the welle,
And of the furies, al she gan him telle.

215. Of Archimoris buryinge and the pleyes,
And how Amphiorax fil through the grounde,
How Tydeus was slayn, lord of Argeyes,
And how Ypomedoun in litel stounde
Was dreynt, and deed Parthonope of wounde;
And also how Cappanëus the proude
With thonder-dint was slayn, that cryde loude.

216. She gan eek telle him how that either brother,
Ethyocles and Polimyte also,
At a scarmyche, eche of hem slough other,
And of Argyves wepinge and hir wo;
And how the town was brent she tolde eek tho.
And so descendeth doun from gestes olde
To Diomede, and thus she spak and tolde.

217. 'This ilke boor bitokneth Diomede,
Tydeus sone, that doun descended is
Fro Meleagre, that made the boor to blede.
And thy lady, wher-so she be, y-wis,
This Diomede hir herte hath, and she his.
Weep if thou wolt, or leef; for, out of doute,
This Diomede is inne, and thou art oute.'

218. 'Thou seyst nat sooth,' quod he, 'thou sorceresse,
With al thy false goost of prophesye!
Thou wenest been a greet devyneresse;
Now seestow not this fool of fantasye
Peyneth hir on ladyes for to lye?
Awey,' quod he, 'ther Joves yeve thee sorwe!
Thou shalt be fals, paraunter, yet to-morwe!

219. As wel thou mightest lyen on Alceste,
That was of creatures, but men lye,
That ever weren, kindest and the beste.
For whanne hir housbonde was in jupartye
To dye him-self, but-if she wolde dye,
She chees for him to dye and go to helle,
And starf anoon, as us the bokes telle.'

220. Cassandre goth, and he with cruel herte
For-yat his wo, for angre of hir speche;
And from his bed al sodeinly he sterte,
As though al hool him hadde y-mad a leche.
And day by day he gan enquere and seche
A sooth of this, with al his fulle cure;
And thus he dryeth forth his aventure.

221. Fortune, whiche that permutacioun
Of thinges hath, as it is hir committed
Through purveyaunce and disposicioun
Of heighe Jove, as regnes shal ben flitted
Fro folk in folk, or whan they shal ben smitted,
Gan pulle awey the fetheres brighte of Troye
Fro day to day, til they ben bare of joye.

222. Among al this, the fyn of the parodie
Of Ector gan approchen wonder blyve;
The fate wolde his soule sholde unbodie,
And shapen hadde a mene it out to dryve;
Ayeins which fate him helpeth not to stryve;
But on a day to fighten gan he wende,
At which, allas! he caughte his lyves ende.

223. For which me thinketh every maner wight
That haunteth armes oughte to biwayle
The deeth of him that was so noble a knight;
For as he drough a king by th'aventayle,
Unwar of this, Achilles through the mayle
And through the body gan him for to ryve;
And thus this worthy knight was brought of lyve.

224. For whom, as olde bokes tellen us,
Was maad swich wo, that tonge it may not telle;
And namely, the sorwe of Troilus,
That next him was of worthinesse welle.
And in this wo gan Troilus to dwelle,
That, what for sorwe, and love, and for unreste,
Ful ofte a day he bad his herte breste.

225. But natheles, though he gan him dispeyre,
And dradde ay that his lady was untrewe,
Yet ay on hir his herte gan repeyre.
And as these loveres doon, he soughte ay newe
To gete ayein Criseyde, bright of hewe.
And in his herte he wente hir excusinge,
That Calkas causede al hir taryinge.

226. And ofte tyme he was in purpos grete
Him-selven lyk a pilgrim to disgyse,
To seen hir; but he may not contrefete
To been unknowen of folk that weren wyse,
Ne finde excuse aright that may suffyse,
If he among the Grekes knowen were;
For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.

227. To hir he wroot yet ofte tyme al newe
Ful pitously, he lefte it nought for slouthe,
Biseching hir that, sin that he was trewe,
She wolde come ayein and holde hir trouthe.
For which Criseyde up-on a day, for routhe,
I take it so, touchinge al this matere,
Wrot him ayein, and seyde as ye may here.

228. 'Cupydes sone, ensample of goodlihede,
O swerd of knighthod, sours of gentilesse!
How mighte a wight in torment and in drede
And helelees, yow sende as yet gladnesse?
I hertelees, I syke, I in distresse;
Sin ye with me, nor I with yow may dele,
Yow neither sende ich herte may nor hele.

229. Your lettres ful, the papir al y-pleynted,
Conseyved hath myn hertes piëtee;
I have eek seyn with teres al depeynted
Your lettre, and how that ye requeren me
To come ayein, which yet ne may not be.
But why, lest that this lettre founden were,
No mencioun ne make I now, for fere.

230. Grevous to me, god woot, is your unreste,
Your haste, and that, the goddes ordenaunce,
It semeth not ye take it for the beste.
Nor other thing nis in your remembraunce,
As thinketh me, but only your plesaunce.
But beth not wrooth, and that I yow biseche;
For that I tarie, is all for wikked speche.

231. For I have herd wel more than I wende,
Touchinge us two, how thinges han y-stonde;
Which I shal with dissimulinge amende.
And beth nought wrooth, I have eek understonde,
How ye ne doon but holden me in honde.
But now no fors, I can not in yow gesse
But alle trouthe and alle gentilesse.

232. Comen I wol, but yet in swich disjoynte
I stonde as now, that what yeer or what day
That this shal be, that can I not apoynte.
But in effect, I prey yow, as I may,
Of your good word and of your frendship ay.
For trewely, whyl that my lyf may dure,
As for a freend, ye may in me assure.

233. Yet preye I yow on yvel ye ne take,
That it is short which that I to yow wryte ;
I dar not, ther I am, wel lettres make.
Ne never yet ne coude I wel endyte.
Eek greet effect men wryte in place lyte.
Th'entente is al, and nought the lettres space ;
And fareth now wel, god have you in his grace !
La vostre C.'

234. This Troilus this lettre thoughte al straunge,
Whan he it saugh, and sorwefully he sighte ;
Him thoughte it lyk a kalendes of chaunge ;
But fynally, he ful ne trowen mighte
That she ne wolde him holden that she highte ;
For with ful yvel wil list him to leve
That loveth wel, in swich cas, though him greve.

235. But natheles, men seyn that, at the laste,
For any thing, men shal the sothe see ;
And swich a cas bitidde, and that as faste,
That Troilus wel understood that she
Nas not so kinde as that hir oughte be.
And fynally, he woot now, out of doute,
That al is lost that he hath been aboute.

236. Stood on a day in his malencolye
This Troilus, and in suspecioun
Of hir for whom he wende for to dye.
And so bifel, that through-out Troye toun,
As was the gyse, y-bore was up and doun
A maner cote-armure, as seyth the storie,
Biforn Deiphebe, in signe of his victorie.

237. The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,
Deiphebe it hadde y-rent from Diomede
The same day ; and whan this Troilus
It saugh, he gan to taken of it hede,
Avysing of the lengthe and of the brede,
And al the werk ; but as he gan biholde,
Ful sodeinly his herte gan to colde.

238. As he that on the coler fond withinne
A broche, that he Criseyde yaf that morwe
That she from Troye moste nedes twinne,
In remembraunce of him and of his sorwe ;
And she him leyde ayein hir feyth to borwe
To kepe it ay ; but now, ful wel he wiste,
His lady nas no lenger on to triste.

239. He gooth him hoom, and gan ful sone sende
For Pandarus ; and al this newe chaunce,
And of this broche, he tolde him word and ende,
Compleyninge of hir hertes variaunce,
His longe love, his trouthe, and his penaunce ;
And after deeth, with-outen wordes more,
Ful faste he cryde, his reste him to restore.

240. Than spak he thus, 'O lady myn Criseyde,
Wher is your feyth, and where is your biheste?
Wher is your love, wher is your trouthe?' he seyde ;
'Of Diomede have ye now al this feste !
Allas, I wolde have trowed at the leste,
That, sin ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde,
That ye thus nolde han holden me in honde !

241. Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
Allas, I never wolde han wend, er this,
That ye, Criseyde, coude han chaunged so ;
Ne, but I hadde a-gilt and doon amis,
So cruel wende I not your herte, y-wis,
To slee me thus ; allas, your name of trouthe
Is now for-doon, and that is al my routhe.

242. Was ther non other broche yow liste lete
To feffe with your newe love,' quod he,
'But thilke broche that I, with teres wete,
Yow yaf, as for a remembraunce of me?
Non other cause, allas, ne hadde ye
But for despyt, and eek for that ye mente
Al-outrely to shewen your entente !

243. Through which I see that clene out of your minde
Ye han me cast, and I ne can nor may,
For al this world, with-in myn herte finde
T'unloven yow a quarter of a day!
In cursed tyme I born was, weylaway!
That ye, that doon me al this wo endure,
Yet love I best of any creature.

244. Now god,' quod he, 'me sende yet the grace
That I may meten with this Diomede!
And trewely, if I have might and space,
Yet shal I make, I hope, his sydes blede.
O god,' quod he, 'that oughtest taken hede
To fortheren trouthe, and wronges to punyce,
Why niltow doon a vengeaunce on this vyce?

245. O Pandare, that in dremes for to triste
Me blamed hast, and wont art ofte upbreyde,
Now maystow see thy-selve, if that thee liste,
How trewe is now thy nece, bright Criseyde!
In sondry formes, god it woot,' he seyde,
'The goddes shewen bothe joye and tene
In slepe, and by my dreme it is now sene.

246. And certaynly, with-oute more speche,
From hennes-forth, as ferforth as I may,
Myn owene deeth in armes wol I seche;
I recche not how sone be the day!
But trewely, Criseyde, swete may,
Whom I have ay with al my might y-served,
That ye thus doon, I have it nought deserved.'

247. This Pandarus, that alle these thinges herde,
And wiste wel he seyde a sooth of this,
He nought a word ayein to him answerde;
For sory of his frendes sorwe he is,
And shamed, for his nece hath doon a-mis;
And stant, astoned of these causes tweye,
As stille as stoon: a word ne coude he seye.

248. But at the laste thus he spak, and seyde,
'My brother dere, I may thee do no-more.
What shulde I seyn? I hate, y-wis, Criseyde!
And god wot, I wol hate hir evermore!
And that thou me bisoughtest doon of yore,
Havinge un-to myn honour ne my reste
Right no reward, I dide al that thee leste.

249. If I dide ought that mighte lyken thee,
It is me leef; and of this treson now,
God woot, that it a sorwe is un-to me!
And dredelees, for hertes ese of yow,
Right fayn wolde I amende it, wiste I how.
And fro this world, almighty god I preye,
Delivere hir sone; I can no-more seye.'

250. Gret was the sorwe and pleynt of Troilus;
But forth hir cours fortune ay gan to holde.
Criseyde loveth the sone of Tydeus,
And Troilus mot wepe in cares colde.
Swich is this world; who-so it can biholde,
In ech estat is litel hertes reste;
God leve us for to take it for the beste!

251. In many cruel batayle, out of drede,
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight,
As men may in these olde bokes rede,
Was sene his knighthod and his grete might.
And dredelees, his ire, day and night,
Ful cruelly the Grekes ay aboughte;
And alwey most this Diomede he soughte.

252. And ofte tyme, I finde that they mette
With blody strokes and with wordes grete,
Assayinge how hir speres weren whette;
And god it woot, with many a cruel hete
Gan Troilus upon his helm to-bete.
But natheles, fortune it nought ne wolde,
Of otheres hond that either deyen sholde.—

253. And if I hadde y-taken for to wryte
The armes of this ilke worthy man,
Than wolde I of his batailles endyte.
But for that I to wryte first bigan
Of his love, I have seyd as that I can.
His worthy dedes, who-so list hem here,
Reed Dares, he can telle hem alle y-fere.

254. Bisechinge every lady bright of hewe,
And every gentil womman, what she be,
That al be that Criseyde was untrewe,
That for that gilt she be not wrooth with me.
Ye may hir gilt in othere bokes see;
And gladlier I wol wryten, if yow leste,
Penelopeës trouthe and good Alceste.

255. Ne I sey not this al-only for these men,
But most for wommen that bitraysed be
Through false folk; god yeve hem sorwe, amen!
That with hir grete wit and subtiltee
Bitrayse yow! and this commeveth me
To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,
Beth war of men, and herkeneth what I seye!—

256. Go, litel book, go litel myn tregedie,
Ther god thy maker yet, er that he dye,
So sende might to make in som comedie!
But litel book, no making thou n'envye,
But subgit be to alle poesye;
And kis the steppes, wher-as thou seest pace
Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.

257. And for ther is so greet diversitee
In English and in wryting of our tonge,
So preye I god that noon miswryte thee,
Ne thee mismetre for defaute of tonge.
And red wher-so thou be, or elles songe,
That thou be understonde I god beseche!
But yet to purpos of my rather speche.—

258. The wraththe, as I began yow for to seye,
Of Troilus, the Grekes boughten dere;
For thousandes his hondes maden deye,
As he that was with-outen any pere,
Save Ector, in his tyme, as I can here.
But weylaway, save only goddes wille,
Dispitously him slough the fiers Achille.

259. And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
Up to the holownesse of the seventh spere,
In convers letinge every element;
And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
The erratik sterres, herkeninge armonye
With sownes fulle of hevenish melodye.

260. And doun from thennes faste he gan avyse
This litel spot of erthe, that with the see
Enbraced is, and fully gan despyse
This wrecched world, and held al vanitee
To respect of the pleyn felicitee
That is in hevene above; and at the laste,
Ther he was slayn, his loking doun he caste;

261. And in him-self he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deeth so faste;
And dampned al our werk that folweth so
The blinde lust, the which that may not laste,
And sholden al our herte on hevene caste.
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurie sorted him to dwelle.—

262. Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love,
Swich fyn hath al his grete worthinesse;
Swich fyn hath his estat real above,
Swice fyn his lust, swich fyn hath his noblesse;
Swich fyn hath false worldes brotelnesse.
And thus bigan his lovinge of Criseyde,
As I have told, and in this wyse he deyde.

263. O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee,
And of your herte up-casteth the visage
To thilke god that after his image
Yow made, and thinketh al nis but a fayre
This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre.

264. And loveth him, the which that right for love
Upon a cros, our soules for to beye,
First starf, and roos, and sit in hevene a-bove;
For he nil falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye.
And sin he best to love is, and most meke,
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?

265. Lo here, of Payens corsed olde rytes,
Lo here, what alle hir goddes may availle;
Lo here, these wrecched worldes appetytes;
Lo here, the fyn and guerdon for travaille
Of Jove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille!
Lo here, the forme of olde clerkes speche
In poetrye, if ye hir bokes seche.—

266. O moral Gower, this book I directe
To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,
To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to corecte,
Of your benignitees and zeles gode.
And to that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode,
With al myn herte of mercy ever I preye;
And to the lord right thus I speke and seye:

267. Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne on-lyve,
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscript, and al mayst circumscryve,
Us from visible and invisible foon
Defende; and to thy mercy, everychoon,
So make us, Jesus, for thy grace, digne,
For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne! Amen.

Explicit Liber Troili et Criseydis.

THE HOUS OF FAME

BOOK I

God turne us every dreem to gode!
For hit is wonder, by the rode,
To my wit, what causeth swevenes
Either on morwes, or on evenes;
And why th'effect folweth of somme,
And of somme hit shal never come;
Why that is an avisioun,
And this a revelacioun;
Why this a dreem, why that a sweven,
And nat to every man liche even;
Why this a fantom, these oracles,
I noot; but who-so of these miracles
The causes knoweth bet than I,
Devyne he; for I certeinly
Ne can hem noght, ne never thinke
To besily my wit to swinke,
To knowe of hir signifiaunce
The gendres, neither the distaunce
Of tymes of hem, ne the causes
For-why this more than that cause is;
As if folkes complexiouns
Make hem dreme of reflexioun;
Or elles thus, as other sayn,
For to greet feblenesse of brayn,
By abstinence, or by seeknesse,
Prison, stewe, or greet distresse;
Or elles by disordinaunce
Of naturel acustomaunce,
That som man is to curious
In studie, or melancolious,
Or thus, so inly ful of drede,

That no man may him bote bede;
Or elles, that devocioun
Of somme, and contemplacioun
Causeth swiche dremes ofte;
Or that the cruel lyf unsofte
Which these ilke lovers leden
That hopen over muche or dreden,
That purely hir impressiouns
Causeth hem avisiouns;
Or if that spirits have the might
To make folk to dreme a-night;
Or if the soule, of propre kinde,
Be so parfit, as men finde,
That hit forwot that is to come,
And that hit warneth alle and somme
Of everiche of hir aventures
By avisiouns, or by figures,
But that our flesh ne hath no might
To understonden hit aright,
For hit is warned to derkly;—
But why the cause is, noght wot I.
Wel worthe, of this thing, grete clerkes,
That trete of this and other werkes;
For I of noon opinioun
Nil as now make mencioun,
But only that the holy rode
Turne us every dreem to gode!
For never, sith that I was born,
Ne no man elles, me biforn,
Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
So wonderful a dreem as I
The tenthe day [dide] of Decembre,
The which, as I can now remembre,
I wol yow tellen every del.

The Invocation.

But at my ginning, trusteth wel,
I wol make invocacioun,
With special devocioun,

Unto the god of slepe anoon,
That dwelleth in a cave of stoon
Upon a streem that comth fro Lete,
That is a flood of helle unswete ;
Besyde a folk men clepe Cimerie,
Ther slepeth ay this god unmerie
With his slepy thousand sones
That alway for to slepe hir wone is—
And to this god, that I of rede,
Preye I, that he wol me spede
My sweven for to telle aright,
If every dreem stonde in his might.
And he, that mover is of al
That is and was, and ever shal,
So yive hem joye that hit here
Of alle that they dreme to-yere,
And for to stonden alle in grace
Of hir loves, or in what place
That hem wer levest for to stonde,
And shelde hem fro povert and shonde,
And fro unhappe and ech disese,
And sende hem al that may hem plese,
That take hit wel, and scorne hit noght,
Ne hit misdemen in her thoght
Through malicious entencioun.
And who-so, through presumpcioun,
Of hate or scorne, or through envye,
Dispyt, or jape, or vilanye,
Misdeme hit, preye I Jesus god
That (dreme he barfoot, dreme he shod),
That every harm that any man
Hath had, sith [that] the world began,
Befalle him therof, or he sterve,
And graunte he mote hit ful deserve,
Lo ! with swich a conclusioun
As had of his avisioun
Cresus, that was king of Lyde,
That high upon a gebet dyde !
This prayer shal he have of me ;
I am no bet in charite !

Now herkneth, as I have you seyd,
What that I mette, or I abreyd.

The Dream.

Of Decembre the tenthe day,
Whan hit was night, to slepe I lay
Right ther as I was wont to done,
And fil on slepe wonder sone,
As he that wery was for-go
On pilgrimage myles two
To the corseynt Leonard,
To make lythe of that was hard.
But as I sleep, me mette I was
Within a temple y-mad of glas;
In whiche ther were mo images
Of gold, stondinge in sondry stages,
And mo riche tabernacles,
And with perree mo pinacles,
And mo curious portreytures,
And queynte maner of figures
Of olde werke, then I saw ever.
For certeynly, I niste never
Wher that I was, but wel wiste I,
Hit was of Venus redely,
The temple; for, in portreyture,
I saw anoon-right hir figure
Naked fletinge in a see.
And also on hir heed, pardee,
Hir rose-garlond whyt and reed,
And hir comb to kembe hir heed,
Hir dowves, and daun Cupido,
Hir blinde sone, and Vulcano,
That in his face was ful broun.
But as I romed up and doun,
I fond that on a wal ther was
Thus writen, on a table of bras:
'I wol now singe, if that I can,
The armes, and al-so the man,

That first cam, through his destinee,
Fugitif of Troye contree,
In Itaile, with ful moche pyne,
Unto the strondes of Lavyne.'
And tho began the story anoon,
As I shal telle yow echoon.
First saw I the destruccioun
Of Troye, through the Greek Sinoun,
[That] with his false forsweringe,
And his chere and his lesinge
Made the hors broght into Troye,
Thorgh which Troyens loste al hir joye.
And after this was grave, allas!
How Ilioun assailed was
And wonne, and king Priam y-slayn,
And Polites his sone, certayn,
Dispitously, of dan Pirrus.
And next that saw I how Venus,
Whan that she saw the castel brende,
Doun fro the hevene gan descende,
And bad hir sone Eneas flee;
And how he fledde, and how that he
Escaped was from al the pres,
And took his fader, Anchises,
And bar him on his bakke away,
Cryinge, 'Allas, and welaway!'
The whiche Anchises in his honde
Bar the goddes of the londe,
Thilke that unbrende were.
And I saw next, in alle this fere,
How Creusa, daun Eneas wyf,
Which that he lovede as his lyf,
And hir yonge sone Iulo,
And eek Ascanius also,
Fledden eek with drery chere,
That hit was pitee for to here;
And in a forest, as they wente,
At a turninge of a wente,
How Creusa was y-lost, allas!
That deed, [but] noot I how, she was;

How he hir soughte, and how hir gost
Bad him to flee the Grekes ost,
And seyde, he moste unto Itaile,
As was his destinee, sauns faille;
That hit was pitee for to here,
Whan hir spirit gan appere,
The wordes that she to him seyde,
And for to kepe hir sone him preyde.
Ther saw I graven eek how he,
His fader eek, and his meynee,
With his shippes gan to sayle
Toward the contree of Itaile,
As streight as that they mighte go.
Ther saw I thee, cruel Juno,
That art daun Jupiteres wyf,
That hast y-hated, al thy lyf,
Al the Troyanisshe blood,
Renne and crye, as thou were wood,
On Eolus, the god of windes,
To blowen out, of alle kindes,
So loude, that he shulde drenche
Lord and lady, grome and wenche
Of al the Troyan nacioun,
Withoute any savacioun.
Ther saw I swich tempeste aryse,
That every herte mighte agryse,
To see hit peynted on the walle.
Ther saw I graven eek withalle,
Venus, how ye, my lady dere,
Wepinge with ful woful chere,
Prayen Jupiter an hye
To save and kepe that navye
Of the Troyan Eneas,
Sith that he hir sone was.
Ther saw I Joves Venus kisse,
And graunted of the tempest lisse.
Ther saw I how the tempest stente,
And how with alle pyne he wente,
And prevely took arrivage
In the contree of Cartage;

And on the morwe, how that he
And a knight, hight Achatee,
Metten with Venus that day,
Goinge in a queynt array,
As she had ben an hunteresse,
With wind blowinge upon hir tresse;
How Eneas gan him to pleyne,
Whan that he knew hir, of his peyne;
And how his shippes dreynte were,
Or elles lost, he niste where;
How she gan him comforte tho,
And bad him to Cartage go,
And there he shuldë his folk finde,
That in the see were left behinde.
And, shortly of this thing to pace,
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dido, quene of that contree,
That, shortly for to tellen, she
Becam his love, and leet him do
That that wedding longeth to.
What shulde I speke more queynte,
Or peyne me my wordes peynte,
To speke of love? hit wol not be;
I can not of that facultee.
And eek to telle the manere
How they aqueynteden in-fere,
Hit were a long proces to telle,
And over long for yow to dwelle.
Ther saw I grave, how Eneas
Tolde Dido every cas,
That him was tid upon the see.
And after grave was, how she
Made of him, shortly, at oo word,
Hir lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord:
And dide him al the reverence,
And leyde on him al the dispence,
That any woman mighte do,
Weninge hit had al be so,
As he hir swoor; and her-by demed
That he was good, for he swich semed.

Allas! what harm doth apparence,
Whan hit is fals in existence!
For he to hir a traitour was;
Wherfor she slow hir-self, allas!
Lo, how a woman doth amis,
To love him that unknowen is!
For, by Crist, lo! thus hit fareth;
'Hit is not al gold, that glareth.'
For, al-so brouke I wel myn heed,
Ther may be under goodliheed
Kevered many a shrewed vyce;
Therfor be no wight so nyce,
To take a love only for chere,
For speche, or for frendly manere;
For this shal every woman finde
That som man, of his pure kinde,
Wol shewen outward the faireste,
Til he have caught that what him leste;
And thanne wol he causes finde,
And swere how that she is unkinde,
Or fals, or prevy, or double was.
Al this seye I by Eneas
And Dido, and hir nyce lest,
That lovede al to sone a gest;
Therfor I wol seye a proverbe,
That 'he that fully knoweth th'erbe
May saufly leye hit to his yë';
Withoute dreed, this is no lye.
But let us speke of Eneas,
How he betrayed hir, allas!
And left hir ful unkindely.
So whan she saw al-utterly,
That he wolde hir of trouthe faile,
And wende fro hir to Itaile,
She gan to wringe hir hondes two.
'Allas!' quod she, 'what me is wo!
Allas! is every man thus trewe,
That every yere wolde have a newe,
If hit so longe tyme dure,
Or elles three, peraventure?

As thus: of oon he wolde have fame
In magnifying of his name;
Another for frendship, seith he;
And yet ther shal the thridde be,
That shal be taken for delyt,
Lo, or for singular profyt.'
In swiche wordes gan to pleyne
Dido of hir grete peyne,
As me mette redely;
Non other auctour alegge I.
'Allas!' quod she, 'my swete herte,
Have pitee on my sorwes smerte,
And slee me not! go noght away!
O woful Dido, wel away!'
Quod she to hir-selve tho.
'O Eneas! what wil ye do?
O, that your love, ne your bonde,
That ye han sworn with your right honde,
Ne my cruel deeth,' quod she,
'May holde yow still heer with me
O, haveth of my deeth pitee!
Y-wis, my dere herte, ye
Knowen ful wel that never yit,
As fer-forth as I hadde wit,
Agilte [I] yow in thoght ne deed.
O, have ye men swich goodliheed
In speche, and never a deel of trouthe?
Allas, that ever hadde routhe
Any woman on any man!
Now see I wel, and telle can,
We wrecched wimmen conne non art;
For certeyn, for the more part,
Thus we be served everichone.
How sore that ye men conne grone,
Anoon, as we have yow receyved,
Certeinly we ben decevyed;
For, though your love laste a sesoun,
Wayte upon the conclusioun,
And eek how that ye determyneu,
And for the more part diffyneu.

'O, welawey that I was born!
For through yow is my name lorn,
And alle myn actes red and songe
Over al this lond, on every tonge.
O wikke Fame! for ther nis
Nothing so swift, lo, as she is!
O, sooth is, every thing is wist,
Though hit be kevered with the mist.
Eek, thogh I mighte duren ever,
That I have doon, rekever I never,
That I ne shal be seyd, allas,
Y-shamed be through Eneas,
And that I shal thus juged be—
"Lo, right as she hath doon, now she
Wol do eftsones, hardily";
Thus seyth the peple prevely.'—
But that is doon, nis not to done;
Al hir compleynt ne al hir mone,
Certeyn, availeth hir not a stree.
And whan she wiste sothly he
Was forth unto his shippes goon,
She in hir chambre wente anoon,
And called on hir suster Anne,
And gan hir to compleyne thanne;
And seyde, that she cause was
That she first lovede Eneas,
And thus counseilled hir therto.
But what! when this was seyd and do,
She roof hir-selve to the herte,
And deyde through the wounde smerte.
But al the maner how she deyde,
And al the wordes that she seyde,
Who-so to knowe hit hath purpos,
Reed Virgile in Eneidos
Or the Epistle of Ovyde,
What that she wroot or that she dyde:
And nere hit to long to endyte,
By god, I woldë hit here wryte.
But, welaway! the harm, the routhe,
That hath betid for swich untrouthe,

As men may ofte in bokes rede,
And al day seen hit yet in dede,
That for to thenken hit, a tene is.
Lo, Demophon, duk of Athenis,
How he forswor him ful falsly
And trayed Phillis wikkedly,
The kinges doghter was of Trace,
And falsly gan his terme pace;
And when she wiste that he was fals,
She heng hir-self right by the hals,
For he had do hir swich untrouthe;
Lo! was not this a wo and routhe?
Eek lo! how fals and reccheles
Was to Briseida Achilles,
And Paris to Oënone;
And Jason to Isiphile;
And eft Jason to Medea;
And Ercules to Dyanira;
For he lefte hir for Iöle,
That made him cacche his deeth, pardee.
How fals eek was he, Theseus;
That, as the story telleth us,
How he betrayed Adriane;
The devel be his soules bane!
For had he laughed, had he loured,
He mostë have be al devoured,
If Adriane ne had y-be!
And, for she had of him pitee,
She made him fro the dethe escape,
And he made hir a ful fals jape;
For after this, within a whyle
He lefte hir slepinge in an yle,
Deserte alone, right in the see,
And stal away, and leet hir be;
And took hir suster Phedra tho
With him, and gan to shippe go.
And yet he had y-sworn to here,
On al that ever he mighte swere,
That, so she saved him his lyf,
He wolde have take hir to his wyf;

For she desired nothing elles,
In certein, as the book us telles.
But to excusen Eneas
Fulliche of al his greet trespas,
The book seyth, Mercurie, sauns faile,
Bad him go into Itaile,
And leve Auffrykes regioun,
And Dido and hir faire toun.
Tho saw I grave, how to Itaile
Daun Eneas is go to saile;
And how the tempest al began,
And how he loste his steresman,
Which that the stere, or he took keep,
Smot over-bord, lo! as he sleep.
And also saw I how Sibyle
And Eneas, besyde an yle,
To helle wente, for to see
His fader, Anchises the free.
How he ther fond Palinurus,
And Dido, and eek Deiphebus;
And every tourment eek in helle
Saw he, which is long to telle.
Which who-so willeth for to knowe,
He moste rede many a rowe
On Virgile or on Claudian,
Or Daunte, that hit telle can.
Tho saw I grave al th'arivaile
That Eneas had in Itaile;
And with king Latine his tretee,
And alle the batailles that he
Was at him-self, and eek his knightes,
Or he had al y-wonne his rightes;
And how he Turnus refte his lyf
And wan Lavyna to his wyf;
And al the mervelous signals
Of the goddes celestials;
How, maugre Juno, Eneas,
For al hir sleighte and hir compas,
Acheved al his aventure;
For Jupiter took of him cure

At the prayere of Venus,—
The whiche I preye alway save us,
And us ay of our sorwes lighte!
  Whan I had seyen al this sighte
In this noble temple thus,
'A, Lord!' thoughte I, 'that madest us,
Yet saw I never swich noblesse
Of images, ne swich richesse,
As I saw graven in this chirche;
But not woot I who dide hem wirche,
Ne wher I am, ne in what contree.
But now wol I go out and see,
Right at the wiket, if I can
See o-wher stering any man,
That may me telle wher I am.'
  When I out at the dores cam,
I faste aboute me beheld.
Then saw I but a large feld,
As fer as that I mighte see,
Withouten toun, or hous, or tree,
Or bush, or gras, or ered lond;
For al the feld nas but of sond
As smal as man may see yet lye
In the desert of Libye;
Ne I no maner creature,
That is y-formed by nature,
Ne saw, me [for] to rede or wisse.
'O Crist,' thoughte I, 'that art in blisse,
Fro fantom and illusioun
Me save!' and with devocioun
Myn yën to the heven I caste.
  Tho was I war, lo! at the laste,
That faste by the sonne, as hyë
As kenne mighte I with myn yë,
Me thoughte I saw an egle sore,
But that hit semed moche more
Then I had any egle seyn.
But this as sooth as deeth, certeyn,
Hit was of golde, and shoon so brighte,
That never saw men such a sighte,

But-if the heven hadde y-wonne
Al newe of golde another sonne;
So shoon the egles fethres brighte,
And somwhat dounward gan hit lighte.

Explicit Liber Primus

BOOK II

Incipit Liber Secundus

Proem

Now herkneth, every maner man
That English understonde can,
And listeth of my dreem to lere ;
For now at erste shul ye here
So selly an avisioun,
That Isaye, ne Scipioun,
Ne king Nabugodonosor,
Pharo, Turnus, ne Elcanor,
Ne mette swich a dreem as this !
Now faire blisful, O Cipris,
So be my favour at this tyme !
And ye, me to endyte and ryme
Helpeth, that on Parnaso dwelle
By Elicon the clere welle.
O Thought, that wroot al that I mette,
And in the tresorie hit shette
Of my brayn ! now shal men see
If any vertu in thee be,
To tellen al my dreem aright ;
Now kythe thyn engyn and might !

The Dream

This egle, of which I have yow told,
That shoon with fethres as of gold,
Which that so hyë gan to sore,
I gan beholde more and more,

To see hir beautee and the wonder ;
But never was ther dint of thonder,
Ne that thing that men calle foudre,
That smoot somtyme a tour to poudre,
And in his swifte coming brende,
That so swythe gan descende,
As this foul, whan hit behelde
That I a-roume was in the felde ;
And with his grimme pawes stronge,
Within his sharpe nayles longe,
Me, fleinge, at a swappe he hente,
And with his sours agayn up wente,
Me caryinge in his clawes starke
As lightly as I were a larke,
How high, I can not telle yow,
For I cam up, I niste how.
For so astonied and a-sweved
Was every vertu in my heved,
What with his sours and with my drede,
That al my feling gan to dede ;
For-why hit was to greet affray.
Thus I longe in his clawes lay,
Til at the laste he to me spak
In mannes vois, and seyde, 'Awak !
And be not so a-gast, for shame !'
And called me tho by my name.
And, for I sholde the bet abreyde—
Me mette—'Awak,' to me he seyde,
Right in the same vois and stevene
That useth oon I coude nevene ;
And with that vois, soth for to sayn,
My minde cam to me agayn ;
For hit was goodly seyd to me,
So nas hit never wont to be.
And herwithal I gan to stere,
And he me in his feet to bere,
Til that he felte that I had hete,
And felte eek tho myn herte bete.
And tho gan he me to disporte,
And with wordes to comforte,

And sayde twyës, 'Seynte Marie !
Thou art noyous for to carie,
And nothing nedeth hit, pardee !
For al-so wis god helpe me
As thou non harm shalt have of this ;
And this cas, that betid thee is,
Is for thy lore and for thy prow ;—
Let see ! darst thou yet loke now ?
Be ful assured, boldely,
I am thy frend.' And therwith I
Gan for to wondren in my minde.
'O god,' thoughte I, 'that madest kinde,
Shal I non other weyes dye ?
Wher Joves wol me stellifye,
Or what thing may this signifye ?
I neither am Enok, ne Elye,
Ne Romulus, ne Ganymede
That was y-bore up, as men rede,
To hevene with dan Jupiter,
And maad the goddes boteler.'
Lo ! this was tho my fantasye !
But he that bar me gan espye
That I so thoghte, and seyde this :—
'Thou demest of thy-self amis ;
For Joves is not ther-aboute—
I dar wel putte thee out of doute—
To make of thee as yet a sterre.
But er I bere thee moche ferre,
I wol thee telle what I am,
And whider thou shalt, and why I cam
To done this, so that thou take
Good herte, and not for fere quake.'
'Gladly,' quod I. 'Now wel,' quod he :—
'First I, that in my feet have thee,
Of which thou hast a feer and wonder,
Am dwelling with the god of thonder,
Which that men callen Jupiter,
That dooth me flee ful ofte fer
To do al his comaundement.
And for this cause he hath me sent

To thee: now herkne, by thy trouthe!
Certeyn, he hath of thee routhe,
That thou so longe trewely
Hast served so ententifly
His blinde nevew Cupido,
And fair Venus [goddesse] also,
Withoute guerdoun ever yit,
And nevertheles hast set thy wit—
Although that in thy hede ful lyte is—
To make bokes, songes, dytees,
In ryme, or elles in cadence,
As thou best canst, in reverence
Of Love, and of his servants eke,
That have his servise soght, and seke;
And peynest thee to preyse his art,
Althogh thou haddest never part;
Wherfor, al-so god me blesse,
Joves halt hit greet humblesse
And vertu eek, that thou wolt make
A-night ful ofte thyn heed to ake,
In thy studie so thou wrytest,
And ever-mo of love endytest,
In honour of him and preysinges,
And in his folkes furtheringes,
And in hir matere al devysest,
And noght him nor his folk despysest,
Although thou mayst go in the daunce
Of hem that him list not avaunce.
'Wherfor, as I seyde, y-wis,
Jupiter considereth this,
And also, beau sir, other thinges;
That is, that thou hast no tydinges
Of Loves folk, if they be glade,
Ne of noght elles that god made;
And noght only fro fer contree
That ther no tyding comth to thee,
But of thy verray neyghebores,
That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Thou herest neither that ne this;
For whan thy labour doon al is,

And hast y-maad thy rekeninges,
In stede of reste and newe thinges,
Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon;
And, also domb as any stoon,
Thou sittest at another boke,
Til fully daswed is thy loke,
And livest thus as an hermyte,
Although thyn abstinence is lyte.
'And therfor Joves, through his grace,
Wol that I bere thee to a place,
Which that hight THE HOUS OF FAME,
To do thee som disport and game,
In som recompensacioun
Of labour and devocioun
That thou hast had, lo! causeles,
To Cupido, the reccheles!
And thus this god, thorgh his meryte,
Wol with som maner thing thee quyte,
So that thou wolt be of good chere.
For truste wel, that thou shalt here,
When we be comen ther I seye,
Mo wonder thinges, dar I leye,
Of Loves folke mo tydinges,
Bothe soth-sawes and lesinges;
And mo loves newe begonne,
And longe y-served loves wonne,
And mo loves casuelly
That been betid, no man wot why,
But as a blind man stert an hare;
And more jolytee and fare,
Whyl that they finde love of stele,
As thinketh hem, and over-al wele;
Mo discords, and mo jelousyes,
Mo murmurs, and mo novelryes,
And mo dissimulaciouns,
And feyned reparaciouns;
And mo berdes in two houres
Withoute rasour or sisoures
Y-maad, then greynes be of sondes;
And eke mo holdinge in hondes,

And also mo renovelaunces
Of olde forleten aqueyntaunces;
Mo love-dayes and acordes
Then on instruments ben cordes;
And eke of loves mo eschaunges
Than ever cornes were in graunges;
Unethe maistow trowen this?'—
Quod he. 'No, helpe me god so wis!'—
Quod I. 'No? why?' quod he. 'For hit
Were impossible, to my wit,
Though that Fame hadde al the pyes
In al a realme, and al the spyes,
How that yet she shulde here al this,
Or they espye hit.' 'O yis, yis!'
Quod he to me, 'that can I preve
By resoun, worthy for to leve,
So that thou yeve thyn advertence
To understonde my sentence.
'First shalt thou heren wher she dwelleth,
And so thyn owne book hit telleth;
Hir paleys stant, as I shal seye,
Right even in middes of the weye
Betwixen hevene, erthe, and see;
That, what-so-ever in al these three
Is spoken, in privee or aperte,
The wey therto is so overte,
And stant eek in so juste a place,
That every soun mot to hit pace,
Or what so comth fro any tonge,
Be hit rouned, red, or songe,
Or spoke in seurtee or drede,
Certein, hit moste thider nede.
'Now herkne wel; for-why I wille
Tellen thee a propre skile,
And worthy demonstracioun
In myn imagynacioun.
'Geffrey, thou wost right wel this,
That every kindly thing that is,
Hath a kindly stede ther he
May best in hit conserved be;

Unto which place every thing,
Through his kindly enclyning,
Moveth for to come to,
Whan that hit is awey therfro ;
As thus ; lo, thou mayst al day see
That any thing that hevy be,
As stoon or leed, or thing of wighte,
And ber hit never so hye on highte,
Lat go thyn hand, hit falleth doun.
'Right so seye I by fyre or soun,
Or smoke, or other thinges lighte,
Alwey they seke upward on highte ;
Whyl ech of hem is at his large,
Light thing up, and dounward charge.
'And for this cause mayst thou see,
That every river to the see
Enclyned is to go, by kinde.
And by these skilles, as I finde,
Hath fish dwellinge in floode and see,
And treës eek in erthe be.
Thus every thing, by this resoun,
Hath his propre mansioun,
To which hit seketh to repaire,
As ther hit shulde not apaire.
Lo, this sentence is knowen couthe
Of every philosophres mouthe,
As Aristotle and dan Platon,
And other clerkes many oon ;
And to confirme my resoun,
Thou wost wel this, that speche is soun,
Or elles no man mighte hit here ;
Now herkne what I wol thee lere.
'Soun is noght but air y-broken,
And every speche that is spoken,
Loud or privee, foul or fair,
In his substaunce is but air ;
For as flaumbe is but lighted smoke,
Right so soun is air y-broke.
But this may be in many wyse,
Of which I wil thee two devyse,

As soun that comth of pype or harpe.
For whan a pype is blowen sharpe,
The air is twist with violence,
And rent; lo, this is my sentence;
Eek, whan men harpe-stringes smyte,
Whether hit be moche or lyte,
Lo, with the strook the air to-breketh;
Right so hit breketh whan men speketh.
Thou wost thou wel what thing is speche.
'Now hennesforth I wol thee teche,
How every speche, or noise, or soun,
Through his multiplicacioun,
Thogh hit were pyped of a mouse,
Moot nede come to Fames House.
I preve hit thus—tak hede now—
By experience; for if that thou
Throwe on water now a stoon,
Wel wost thou, hit wol make anoon
A litel roundel as a cercle,
Paraventure brood as a covercle;
And right anoon thou shalt see weel,
That wheel wol cause another wheel,
And that the thridde, and so forth, brother,
Every cercle causing other,
Wyder than himselve was;
And thus, fro roundel to compas,
Ech aboute other goinge,
Caused of otheres steringe,
And multiplying ever-mo,
Til that hit be so fer y-go
That hit at bothe brinkes be.
Al-thogh thou mowe hit not y-see
Above, hit goth yet alway under,
Although thou thenke hit a gret wonder.
And who-so seith of trouthe I varie,
Bid him proven the contrarie.
And right thus every word, y-wis,
That loude or privee spoken is,
Moveth first an air aboute,
And of this moving, out of doute,

Another air anoon is meved,
As I have of the water preved,
That every cercle causeth other.
Right so of air, my leve brother;
Everich air in other stereth
More and more, and speche up bereth,
Or vois, or noise, or word, or soun,
Ay through multiplicacioun,
Til hit be atte House of Fame;—
Tak hit in ernest or in game.
'Now have I told, if thou have minde,
How speche or soun, of pure kinde,
Enclyned is upward to meve;
This, mayst thou fele, wel I preve.
And that the mansioun, y-wis,
That every thing enclyned to is,
Hath his kindeliche stede:
Than sheweth hit, withouten drede,
That kindely the mansioun
Of every speche, of every soun,
Be hit either foul or fair,
Hath his kinde place in air.
And sin that every thing, that is
Out of his kinde place, y-wis,
Moveth thider for to go
If hit a-weye be therfro,
As I before have preved thee,
Hit seweth, every soun, pardee,
Moveth kindely to pace
Al up into his kindely place.
And this place of which I telle,
Ther as Fame list to dwelle,
Is set amiddes of these three,
Heven, erthe, and eek the see,
As most conservatif the soun.
Than is this the conclusioun,
That every speche of every man
As I thee telle first began,
Moveth up on high to pace
Kindely to Fames place.

'Telle me this feithfully,
Have I not preved thus simply,
Withouten any subtiltee
Of speche, or gret prolixitee
Of termes of philosophye,
Of figures of poetrye,
Or colours of rethoryke?
Pardee, hit oghte thee to lyke;
For hard langage and hard matere
Is encombrous for to here
At ones; wost thou not wel this?'
And I answerde, and seyde, 'Yis.'
'A ha!' quod he, 'lo, so I can
Lewedly to a lewed man
Speke, and shewe him swiche skiles,
That he may shake hem by the biles,
So palpable they shulden be.
But tel me this, now pray I thee,
How thinkth thee my conclusioun?'
[Quod he]. 'A good persuasioun,'
Quod I, 'hit is; and lyk to be
Right so as thou hast preved me.'
'By god,' quod he, 'and as I leve,
Thou shalt have yit, or hit be eve,
Of every word of this sentence
A preve, by experience;
And with thyn eres heren wel
Top and tail, and everydel,
That every word that spoken is
Comth into Fames Hous, y-wis,
As I have seyd; what wilt thou more?'
And with this word upper to sore
He gan, and seyde, 'By Seynt Jame!
Now wil we speken al of game.'—
'How farest thou?' quod he to me.
'Wel,' quod I. 'Now see,' quod he,
'By thy trouthe, yond adoun,
Wher that thou knowest any toun,
Or hous, or any other thing.
And whan thou hast of ought knowing,

Loke that thou warne me,
And I anoon shal telle thee
How fer that thou art now therefro.'
And I adoun gan loken tho,
And beheld feldes and plaines,
And now hilles, and now mountaines,
Now valeys, and now forestes,
And now, unethes, grete bestes;
Now riveres, now citees,
Now tounes, and now grete trees,
Now shippes sailinge in the see.
But thus sone in a whyle he
Was flowen fro the grounde so hyë,
That al the world, as to myn yë,
No more semed than a prikke;
Or elles was the air so thikke
That I ne mighte not discerne.
With that he spak to me as yerne,
And seyde: 'Seestow any toun
Or ought thou knowest yonder doun?
I seyde, 'Nay.' 'No wonder nis,'
Quod he, 'for half so high as this
Nas Alexander Macedo;
Ne the king, dan Scipio,
That saw in dreme, at point devys,
Helle and erthe, and paradys;
Ne eek the wrecche Dedalus,
Ne his child, nyce Icarus,
That fleigh so highe that the hete
His winges malt, and he fel wete
In-mid the see, and ther he dreynte,
For whom was maked moch compleynte.
'Now turn upward,' quod he, 'thy face,
And behold this large place,
This air; but loke thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou shalt see;
For in this regioun, certein,
Dwelleth many a citezein,
Of which that speketh dan Plato.
These ben the eyrish bestes, lo!'

And so saw I al that meynee
Bothe goon and also flee.
'Now,' quod he tho, 'cast up thyn yë;
See yonder, lo, the Galaxyë,
Which men clepeth the Milky Wey,
For hit is whyt: and somme, parfey,
Callen hit Watlinge Strete:
That ones was y-brent with hete,
Whan the sonnes sone, the rede,
That highte Pheton, wolde lede
Algate his fader cart, and gye.
The cart-hors gonne wel espye
That he ne coude no governaunce,
And gonne for to lepe and launce,
And beren him now up, now doun,
Til that he saw the Scorpioun,
Which that in heven a signe is yit.
And he, for ferde, loste his wit,
Of that, and leet the reynes goon
Of his hors; and they anoon
Gonne up to mounte, and doun descende
Til bothe the eyr and erthe brende;
Til Jupiter, lo, atte laste,
Him slow, and fro the carte caste.
Lo, is it not a greet mischaunce,
To lete a fole han governaunce
Of thing that he can not demeine?'
And with this word, soth for to seyne,
He gan alway upper to sore,
And gladded me ay more and more,
So feithfully to me spak he.
Tho gan I loken under me,
And beheld the eyrish bestes,
Cloudes, mistes, and tempestes,
Snowes, hailes, reines, windes,
And th'engendring in hir kindes,
And al the wey through whiche I cam;
'O god,' quod I, 'that made Adam,
Moche is thy might and thy noblesse!'

And tho thoughte I upon Boëce,
That writ, 'a thought may flee so hyë
With fetheres of Philosophye,
To passen everich element;
And whan he hath so fer y-went,
Than may be seen, behind his bak,
Cloud, and al that I of spak.'
Tho gan I wexen in a were,
And seyde, 'I woot wel I am here;
But wher in body or in gost
I noot, y-wis; but god, thou wost!'
For more cleer entendement
Nadde he me never yit y-sent.
And than thoughte I on Marcian,
And eek on Anteclaudian,
That sooth was hir descripcioun
Of al the hevenes regioun,
As fer as that I saw the preve;
Therfor I can hem now beleve.
With that this egle gan to crye:
'Lat be,' quod he, 'thy fantasye;
Wilt thou lere of sterres aught?'
'Nay, certeinly,' quod I, 'right naught;
And why? for I am now to old.'
'Elles I wolde thee have told,'
Quod he, 'the sterres names, lo,
And al the hevenes signes to,
And which they been.' 'No fors,' quod I.
'Yis, pardee,' quod he: 'wostow why?
For whan thou redest poetrye,
How goddes gonne stellifye
Brid, fish, beste, or him or here,
As the Raven, or either Bere,
Or Ariones harpe fyn,
Castor, Pollux, or Delphyn,
Or Atlantes doughtres sevene,
How alle these arn set in hevene;
For though thou have hem ofte on honde,
Yet nostow not wher that they stonde.'
'No fors,' quod I, 'hit is no nede:

I leve as wel, so god me spede,
Hem that wryte of this matere,
As though I knew hir places here;
And eek they shynen here so brighte,
Hit shulde shenden al my sighte,
To loke on hem.' 'That may wel be,'
Quod he. And so forth bar he me
A whyl, and than he gan to crye,
That never herde I thing so hye,
'Now up the heed; for al is wel;
Seynt Julyan, lo, bon hostel!
See here the House of Fame, lo!
Maistow not heren that I do?'
'What?' quod I. 'The grete soun,'
Quod he, 'that rumbleth up and doun
In Fames Hous, ful of tydinges,
Bothe of fair speche and chydinges,
And of fals and soth compouned.
Herkne wel; hit is not rouned.
Herestow not the gret swogh?'
'Yis, pardee,' quod I, 'wel y-nogh.'
'And what soun is it lyk?' quod he.
'Peter! lyk beting of the see,'
Quod I, 'again the roches holowe,
Whan tempest doth the shippes swalowe;
And lat a man stonde, out of doute,
A myle thens, and here hit route;
Or elles lyk the last humblinge
After the clappe of a thundringe,
When Joves hath the air y-bete;
But hit doth me for fere swete.'
'Nay, dred thee not therof,' quod he,
'Hit is nothing wil byten thee;
Thou shalt non harm have, trewely.'
And with this word bothe he and I
As nigh the place arryved were
As men may casten with a spere.
I nistë how, but in a strete
He sette me faire on my fete,
And seyde, 'Walke forth a pas,

And tak thyn aventure or cas,
That thou shalt finde in Fames place.'
'Now,' quod I, 'whyl we han space
To speke, or that I go fro thee,
For the love of god, tel me,
In sooth that wil I of thee lere,
If this noise that I here
Be, as I have herd thee tellen,
Of folk that doun in erthe dwellen,
And comth here in the same wyse
As I thee herde or this devyse;
And that ther lyves body nis
In al that hous that yonder is,
That maketh al this loude fare?'
'No,' quod he, 'by Seynte Clare,
And also wis god rede me!
But o thinge I wil warne thee
Of the which thou wolt have wonder.
Lo, to the House of Fame yonder
Thou wost how cometh every speche,
Hit nedeth noght thee eft to teche.
But understond now right wel this;
Whan any speche y-comen is
Up to the paleys, anon-right
Hit wexeth lyk the same wight
Which that the word in erthe spak,
Be hit clothed reed or blak;
And hath so verray his lyknesse
That spak the word, that thou wilt gesse
That hit the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.
And is not this a wonder thing?'
'Yis,' quod I tho, 'by hevene king!'
And with this worde, 'Farwel,' quod he,
'And here I wol abyden thee;
And god of hevene sende thee grace,
Som good to lernen in this place.'
And I of him took leve anoon,
And gan forth to the paleys goon.

Explicit Liber Secundus

BOOK III

Incipit Liber Tercius

Invocation

O god of science and of light,
Apollo, through thy grete might,
This litel laste book thou gye!
Nat that I wilne, for maistrye,
Here art poetical be shewed;
But, for the rym is light and lewed,
Yit make hit sumwhat agreable,
Though som vers faile in a sillable;
And that I do no diligence
To shewe craft, but o sentence.
And if, divyne vertu, thou
Wilt helpe me to shewe now
That in myn hede y-marked is—
Lo, that is for to menen this,
The Hous of Fame to descryve—
Thou shalt see me go, as blyve,
Unto the nexte laure I see,
And kisse hit, for hit is thy tree;
Now entreth in my breste anoon!—

The Dream

Whan I was fro this egle goon,
I gan beholde upon this place.
And certein, or I ferther pace,
I wol yow al the shap devyse

Of hous and site ; and al the wyse
How I gan to this place aproche
That stood upon so high a roche,
Hyer stant ther noon in Spaine.
But up I clomb with alle paine,
And though to climbe hit greved me,
Yit I ententif was to see,
And for to pouren wonder lowe,
If I coude any weyes knowe
What maner stoon this roche was ;
For hit was lyk a thing of glas,
But that hit shoon ful more clere ;
But of what congeled matere
Hit was, I niste redely.
But at the laste espyed I,
And found that hit was, every deel,
A roche of yse, and not of steel.
Thoughte I, 'By Seynt Thomas of Kent!
This were a feble foundement
To bilden on a place hye ;
He oughte him litel glorifye
That her-on bilt, god so me save!'
Tho saw I al the half y-grave
With famous folkes names fele,
That had y-been in mochel wele,
And hir fames wyde y-blowe.
But wel unethes coude I knowe
Any lettres for to rede
Hir names by ; for, out of drede,
They were almost of-thowed so,
That of the lettres oon or two
Was molte away of every name,
So unfamous was wexe hir fame ;
But men seyn, 'What may ever laste?'
Tho gan I in myn herte caste,
That they were molte awey with hete,
And not awey with stormes bete.
For on that other syde I sey
Of this hille, that northward lay,
How hit was writen ful of names

Of folk that hadden grete fames
Of olde tyme, and yit they were
As fresshe as men had writen hem there
The selve day right, or that houre
That I upon hem gan to poure.
But wel I wiste what hit made;
Hit was conserved with the shade—
Al this wrytinge that I sy—
Of a castel, that stood on hy,
And stood eek on so cold a place,
That hete mighte hit not deface.
Tho gan I up the hille to goon,
And fond upon the coppe a woon,
That alle the men that ben on lyve
Ne han the cunning to descryve
The beautee of that ilke place,
Ne coude casten no compace
Swich another for to make,
That mighte of beautee be his make,
Ne [be] so wonderliche y-wrought;
That hit astonieth yit my thought,
And maketh al my wit to swinke
On this castel to bethinke.
So that the grete craft, beautee,
The cast, the curiositee
Ne can I not to yow devyse,
My wit ne may me not suffyse.
But natheles al the substance
I have yit in my remembrance;
For-why me thoughte, by Seynt Gyle!
Al was of stone of beryle,
Bothe castel and the tour,
And eek the halle, and every bour,
Withouten peces or joininges.
But many subtil compassinges,
Babewinnes and pinacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw; and ful eek of windowes,
As flakes falle in grete snowes.
And eek in ech of the pinacles

Weren sondry habitacles,
In whiche stoden, al withoute—
Ful the castel, al aboute—
Of alle maner of minstrales,
And gestiours, that tellen tales
Bothe of weping and of game,
Of al that longeth unto Fame.
  Ther herde I pleyen on an harpe
That souned bothe wel and sharpe,
Orpheus ful craftely,
And on his syde, faste by,
Sat the harper Orion,
And Eacides Chiron,
And other harpers many oon,
And the Bret Glascurion;
And smale harpers with her gleës
Seten under hem in seës,
And gonne on hem upward to gape,
And countrefete hem as an ape,
Or as craft countrefeteth kinde.
  Tho saugh I stonden hem behinde,
A-fer fro hem, al by hemselve,
Many thousand tymes twelve,
That maden loude menstralcyes
In cornemuse, and shalmyes,
An many other maner pype,
That craftely begunne pype
Bothe in doucet and in rede,
That ben at festes with the brede;
And many floute and lilting-horne,
And pypes made of grene corne,
As han thise litel herde-gromes,
That kepen bestes in the bromes.
  Ther saugh I than Atiteris,
And of Athenes dan Pseustis,
And Marcia that lost her skin,
Bothe in face, body, and chin,
For that she wolde envyen, lo!
To pypen bet then Apollo.
Ther saugh I famous, olde and yonge,

Pypers of the Duche tonge,
To lerne love-daunces, springes,
Reyes, and these straunge thinges.
  Tho saugh I in another place
Stonden in a large space,
Of hem that maken blody soun
In trumpe, beme, and clarioun;
For in fight and blood-shedinge
Is used gladly clarioninge.
  Ther herde I trumpen Messenus,
Of whom that speketh Virgilius.
Ther herde I Joab trumpe also,
Theodomas, and other mo;
And alle that used clarion
In Cataloigne and Aragon,
That in hir tyme famous were
To lerne, saugh I trumpe there.
  Ther saugh I sitte in other seës,
Pleyinge upon sondry gleës,
Whiche that I cannot nevene,
Mo then sterres been in hevene,
Of whiche I nil as now not ryme,
For ese of yow, and losse of tyme:
For tyme y-lost, this knowen ye,
By no way may recovered be.
  Ther saugh I pleyen jogelours,
Magiciens and tregetours,
And phitonesses, charmeresses,
Olde wicches, sorceresses,
That use exorsisaciouns
And eek thise fumigaciouns;
And clerkes eek, which conne wel
Al this magyke naturel,
That craftely don hir ententes,
To make, in certeyn ascendentes,
Images, lo, through which magyk
To make a man ben hool or syk.
Ther saugh I thee, queen Medea,
And Circes eke, and Calipsa;
Ther saugh I Hermes Ballenus,

Lymote, and eek Simon Magus.
Ther saugh I, and knew hem by name,
That by such art don men han fame.
Ther saugh I Colle tregetour
Upon a table of sicamour
Pleye an uncouthe thing to telle;
I saugh him carien a wind-melle
Under a walsh-note shale.
What shuld I make lenger tale
Of al the peple that I say,
Fro hennes in-to domesday?
Whan I had al this folk beholde,
And fond me lous, and noght y-holde,
And eft y-mused longe whyle
Upon these walles of beryle,
That shoon ful lighter than a glas,
And made wel more than hit was
To semen, every thing, y-wis,
As kinde thing of fames is;
I gan forth romen til I fond
The castel-yate on my right hond,
Which that so wel corven was
That never swich another nas;
And yit hit was by aventure
Y-wrought, as often as by cure.
Hit nedeth noght yow for to tellen,
To make yow to longe dwellen,
Of this yates florisshinges,
Ne of compasses, ne of kervinges,
Ne how they hatte in masoneries,
As, corbets fulle of imageries.
But, lord! so fair hit was to shewe,
For hit was al with gold behewe.
But in I wente, and that anoon;
Ther mette I crying many oon,—
'A larges, larges, hold up wel!
God save the lady of this pel,
Our owne gentil lady Fame,
And hem that wilnen to have name
Of us!' Thus herde I cryen alle,

And faste comen out of halle,
And shoken nobles and sterlinges.
And somme crouned were as kinges,
With crounes wroght ful of losenges;
And many riban, and many frenges
Were on hir clothes trewely.
Tho atte laste aspyed I
That pursevauntes and heraudes,
That cryen riche folkes laudes,
Hit weren alle; and every man
Of hem, as I yow tellen can,
Had on him throwen a vesture,
Which that men clepe a cote-armure,
Enbrowded wonderliche riche,
Al-though they nere nought y-liche
But noght nil I, so mote I thryve,
Been aboute to discryve
Al these armes that ther weren,
That they thus on hir cotes beren,
For hit to me were impossible;
Men mighte make of hem a bible
Twenty foot thikke, as I trowe.
For certeyn, who-so coude y-knowe
Mighte ther alle the armes seen
Of famous folk that han y-been
In Auffrike, Europe, and Asye,
Sith first began the chevalrye.
Lo! how shulde I now telle al this?
Ne of the halle eek what nede is
To tellen yow, that every wal
Of hit, and floor, and roof and al
Was plated half a fote thikke
Of gold, and that nas no-thing wikke,
But, for to prove in alle wyse,
As fyn as ducat in Venyse,
Of whiche to lyte al in my pouche is?
And they wer set as thikke of nouchis
Fulle of the fynest stones faire,
That men rede in the Lapidaire,
As greses growen in a mede;

But hit were al to longe to rede
The names: and therfore I pace.
But in this riche lusty place,
That Fames halle called was,
Ful moche prees of folk ther nas,
Ne crouding, for to mochil prees.
But al on hye, above a dees,
Sitte in a see imperial,
That maad was of a rubee al,
Which that a carbuncle is y-called,
I saugh, perpetually y-stalled,
A feminyne creature;
That never formed by nature
Nas swich another thing y-seye.
For altherfirst, soth for to seye,
Me thoughte that she was so lyte,
That the lengthe of a cubyte
Was lenger than she semed be;
But thus sone, in a whyle, she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte,
That with hir feet she th'erthe reighte,
And with hir heed she touched hevene,
Ther as shynen sterres sevene.
And ther-to eek, as to my wit,
I saugh a gretter wonder yit,
Upon hir eyen to beholde;
But certeyn I hem never tolde;
For as fele eyen hadde she
As fetheres upon foules be,
Or weren on the bestes foure,
That goddes trone gunne honoure,
As John writ in th'apocalips.
Hir heer, that oundy was and crips,
As burned gold hit shoon to see.
And sooth to tellen, also she
Had also fele up-stonding eres
And tonges, as on bestes heres;
And on hir feet wexen saugh I
Partriches winges redely.
But, lord! the perrie and the richesse

I saugh sitting on this goddesse!
And, lord! the hevenish melodye
Of songes, ful of armonye,
I herde aboute her trone y-songe,
That al the paleys-walles ronge!
So song the mighty Muse, she
That cleped is Caliopee,
And hir eighte sustren eke,
That in hir face semen meke;
And evermo, eternally,
They songe of Fame, as tho herde I: —
'Heried be thou and thy name,
Goddesse of renoun and of fame!'
Tho was I war, lo, atte laste,
As I myn eyen gan up caste,
That this ilke noble quene
On hir shuldres gan sustene
Bothe th'armes and the name
Of tho that hadde large fame;
Alexander, and Hercules
That with a sherte his lyf lees!
Thus fond I sitting this goddesse,
In nobley, honour, and richesse;
Of which I stinte a whyle now,
Other thing to tellen yow.
Tho saugh I stonde on either syde,
Streight doun to the dores wyde,
Fro the dees, many a pileer
Of metal, that shoon not ful cleer;
But though they nere of no richesse,
Yet they were maad for greet noblesse,
And in hem greet [and hy] sentence;
And folk of digne reverence,
Of whiche I wol yow telle fonde,
Upon the piler saugh I stonde.
Alderfirst, lo, ther I sigh,
Upon a piler stonde on high,
That was of lede and yren fyn,
Him of secte Saturnyn,
Th' Ebrayk Josephus, the olde,

That of Jewes gestes tolde;
And bar upon his shuldres hye
The fame up of the Jewerye.
And by him stoden other sevene,
Wyse and worthy for to nevene,
To helpen him bere up the charge,
Hit was so hevy and so large.
And for they writen of batailes,
As wel as other olde mervailes,
Therfor was, lo, this pileer,
Of which that I yow telle heer,
Of lede and yren bothe, y-wis.
For yren Martes metal is,
Which that god is of bataile;
And the leed, withouten faile,
Is, lo, the metal of Saturne,
That hath ful large wheel to turne.
Tho stoden forth, on every rowe,
Of hem which that I coude knowe,
Thogh I hem noght by ordre telle,
To make yow to long to dwelle.
These, of whiche I ginne rede,
Ther saugh I stonden, out of drede:
Upon an yren piler strong,
That peynted was, al endelong,
With tygres blode in every place,
The Tholosan that highte Stace,
That bar of Thebes up the fame
Upon his shuldres, and the name
Also of cruel Achilles.
And by him stood, withouten lees,
Ful wonder hye on a pileer
Of yren, he, the gret Omeer;
And with him Dares and Tytus
Before, and eek he, Lollius,
And Guido eek de Columpnis,
And English Gaufride eek, y-wis;
And ech of these, as have I joye,
Was besy for to bere up Troye.
So hevy ther-of was the fame,

That for to bere hit was no game.
But yit I gan ful wel espye,
Betwix hem was a litel envye.
Oon seyde, Omere made lyes,
Feyninge in his poetryes,
And was to Grekes favorable;
Therfor held he hit but fable.
Tho saugh I stonde on a pileer,
That was of tinned yren cleer,
That Latin poete, [dan] Virgyle,
That bore hath up a longe whyle
The fame of Pius Eneas.
And next him on a piler was,
Of coper, Venus clerk, Ovyde,
That hath y-sowen wonder wyde
The grete god of Loves name.
And ther he bar up wel his fame,
Upon this piler, also hye
As I might see hit with myn yë:
For-why this halle, of whiche I rede
Was woxe on highte, lengthe and brede,
Wel more, by a thousand del,
Than hit was erst, that saugh I wel.
Tho saugh I, on a piler by,
Of yren wroght ful sternely,
The grete poete, daun Lucan,
And on his shuldres bar up than,
As highe as that I mighte see,
The fame of Julius and Pompee.
And by him stoden alle these clerkes,
That writen of Romes mighty werkes,
That, if I wolde hir names telle,
Al to longe moste I dwelle.
And next him on a piler stood
Of soulfre, lyk as he were wood,
Dan Claudian, the soth to telle,
That bar up al the fame of helle,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne,
That quene is of the derke pyne.
What shulde I more telle of this?

The halle was al ful, y-wis,
Of hem that writen olde gestes,
As ben on treës rokes nestes;
But hit a ful confus matere
Were al the gestes for to here,
That they of write, and how they highte.
But whyl that I beheld this sighte,
I herde a noise aprochen blyve,
That ferde as been don in an hyve,
Agen her tyme of out-fleyinge;
Right swiche a maner murmuringe,
For al the world, hit semed me.
Tho gan I loke aboute and see,
That ther com entring in the halle
A right gret company with-alle,
And that of sondry regiouns,
Of alleskinnes condiciouns,
That dwelle in erthe under the mone,
Pore and ryche. And also sone
As they were come into the halle,
They gonne doun on kneës falle
Before this ilke noble quene,
And seyde, 'Graunte us, lady shene,
Ech of us, of thy grace, a bone!'
And somme of hem she graunted sone,
And somme she werned wel and faire;
And somme she graunted the contraire
Of hir axing utterly.
But thus I seye yow trewely,
What hir cause was, I niste.
For this folk, ful wel I wiste,
They hadde good fame ech deserved,
Althogh they were diversly served;
Right as hir suster, dame Fortune,
Is wont to serven in comune.
Now herkne how she gan to paye
That gonne hir of hir grace praye;
And yit, lo, al this companye
Seyden sooth, and noght a lye.
'Madame,' seyden they, 'we be

Folk that heer besechen thee,
That thou graunte us now good fame,
And lete our werkes han that name;
In ful recompensacioun
Of good werk, give us good renoun.'
'I werne yow hit,' quod she anoon,
'Ye gete of me good fame noon,
By god! and therfor go your wey.'
'Alas,' quod they, 'and welaway!
Telle us, what may your cause be?'
'For me list hit noght,' quod she;
'No wight shal speke of yow, y-wis,
Good ne harm, ne that ne this.'
And with that word she gan to calle
Hir messanger, that was in halle,
And bad that he shulde faste goon,
Up peyne to be blind anoon,
For Eolus, the god of winde;—
'In Trace ther ye shul him finde,
And bid him bringe his clarioun,
That is ful dyvers of his soun,
And hit is cleped Clere Laude,
With which he wont is to heraude
Hem that me list y-preised be:
And also bid him how that he
Bringe his other clarioun,
That highte Sclaundre in every toun,
With which he wont is to diffame
Hem that me list, and do hem shame.'
This messanger gan faste goon,
And found wher, in a cave of stoon,
In a contree that highte Trace,
This Eolus, with harde grace,
Held the windes in distresse,
And gan hem under him to presse,
That they gonne as beres rore,
He bond and pressed hem so sore.
This messanger gan faste crye,
'Rys up,' quod he, 'and faste hye,
Til that thou at my lady be;

And tak thy clarions eek with thee,
And speed thee forth.' And he anon
Took to a man, that hight Triton,
His clariouns to bere tho,
And leet a certeyn wind to go,
That blew so hidously and hye,
That hit ne lefte not a skye
In al the welken longe and brood.
This Eolus no-wher abood
Til he was come at Fames feet,
And eek the man that Triton heet;
And ther he stood, as still as stoon.
And her-withal ther com anoon
Another huge companye
Of gode folk, and gunne crye,
'Lady, graunte us now good fame,
And lat our werkes han that name
Now, in honour of gentilesse,
And also god your soule blesse!
For we han wel deserved hit,
Therfor is right that we ben quit.'
'As thryve I,' quod she, 'ye shal faile,
Good werkes shal yow noght availe
To have of me good fame as now.
But wite ye what? I graunte yow,
That ye shal have a shrewed fame
And wikked loos, and worse name,
Though ye good loos have wel deserved.
Now go your wey, for ye be served;
And thou, dan Eolus, let see!
Tak forth thy trumpe anon,' quod she,
'That is y-cleped Sclaunder light,
And blow hir loos, that every wight
Speke of hem harm and shrewednesse,
In stede of good and worthinesse.
For thou shalt trumpe al the contraire
Of that they han don wel or faire.'
'Alas,' thoughte I, 'what aventures
Han these sory creatures!
For they, amonges al the pres,

Shul thus be shamed gilteles !
But what ! hit moste nedes be.'
What did this Eolus, but he
Tok out his blakke trumpe of bras,
That fouler than the devil was,
And gan this trumpe for to blowe,
As al the world shulde overthrowe ;
That through-out every regioun
Wente this foule trumpes soun,
As swift as pelet out of gonne,
Whan fyr is in the poudre ronne.
And swiche a smoke gan out-wende
Out of his foule trumpes ende,
Blak, blo, grenish, swartish reed,
As doth wher that men melte leed,
Lo, al on high fro the tuel !
And therto oo thing saugh I wel,
That, the ferther that hit ran,
The gretter wexen hit began,
As doth the river from a welle,
And hit stank as the pit of helle.
Alas, thus was hir shame y-ronge,
And giltelees, on every tonge.
Tho com the thridde companye,
And gunne up to the dees to hye,
And doun on knees they fille anon,
And seyde, 'We ben everichon
Folk that han ful trewely
Deserved fame rightfully,
And praye yow, hit mot be knowe,
Right as hit is, and forth y-blowe.'
'I graunte,' quod she, 'for me list
That now your gode werk be wist ;
And yit ye shul han better loos,
Right in dispyt of alle your foos,
Than worthy is ; and that anoon :
Lat now,' quod she, 'thy trumpe goon,
Thou Eolus, that is so blak ;
And out thyn other trumpe tak
That highte Laude, and blow hit so

That through the world hir fame go
Al esely, and not to faste,
That hit be knowen atte laste.'
'Ful gladly, lady myn,' he seyde;
And out his trumpe of golde he brayde
Anon, and sette hit to his mouthe,
And blew hit est, and west, and southe,
And north, as loude as any thunder,
That every wight hadde of hit wonder,
So brode hit ran, or than hit stente.
And, certes, al the breeth that wente
Out of his trumpes mouthe smelde
As men a pot-ful bawme helde
Among a basket ful of roses;
This favour dide he til hir loses.
And right with this I gan aspye,
Ther com the ferthe companye—
But certeyn they were wonder fewe—
And gonne stonden in a rewe,
And seyden, 'Certes, lady brighte,
We han don wel with al our mighte;
But we ne kepen have no fame.
Hyd our werkes and our name,
For goddes love! for certes we
Han certeyn doon hit for bountee,
And for no maner other thing.'
'I graunte yow al your asking,'
Quod she; 'let your werk be deed.'
With that aboute I clew myn heed,
And saugh anoon the fifte route
That to this lady gonne loute,
And doun on knees anoon to falle;
And to hir tho besoughten alle
To hyde hir gode werkes eek,
And seyde, they yeven noght a leek
For fame, ne for swich renoun;
For they, for contemplacioun
And goddes love, hadde y-wrought;
Ne of fame wolde they nought.
'What?' quod she, 'and be ye wood?

And wene ye for to do good,
And for to have of that no fame?
Have ye dispyt to have my name?
Nay, ye shul liven everichoon!
Blow thy trumpe and that anoon,'
Quod she, 'thou Eolus, I hote,
And ring this folkes werk by note,
That al the world may of hit here.'
And he gan blowe hir loos so clere
In his golden clarioun,
That through the world wente the soun,
So kenely, and eek so softe;
But atte laste hit was on-lofte.
Thoo com the sexte companye,
And gonne faste on Fame crye.
Right verraily, in this manere
They seyden: 'Mercy, lady dere!
To telle certein, as hit is,
We han don neither that ne this,
But ydel al our lyf y-be.
But, natheles, yit preye we,
That we mowe han so good a fame,
And greet renoun and knowen name,
As they that han don noble gestes,
And acheved alle hir lestes,
As wel of love as other thing;
Al was us never broche ne ring,
Ne elles nought, from wimmen sent,
Ne ones in hir herte y-ment
To make us only frendly chere,
But mighte temen us on bere;
Yit lat us to the peple seme
Swiche as the world may of us deme,
That wimmen loven us for wood.
Hit shal don us as moche good,
And to our herte as moche availe
To countrepeise ese and travaile,
As we had wonne hit with labour;
For that is dere boght honour
At regard of our grete ese.

And yit thou most us more plese ;
Let us be holden eek, therto,
Worthy, wyse, and gode also,
And riche, and happy unto love.
For goddes love, that sit above,
Though we may not the body have
Of wimmen, yet, so god yow save !
Let men glewe on us the name ;
Suffyceth that we han the fame.'
'I graunte,' quod she, 'by my trouthe !
Now, Eolus, with-outen slouthe,
Tak out thy trumpe of gold, let see,
And blow as they han axed me,
That every man wene hem at ese,
Though they gon in ful badde lese.'
This Eolus gan hit so blowe,
That through the world hit was y-knowe.
Tho com the seventh route anoon,
And fel on kneës everichoon,
And seyde, 'Lady, graunte us sone
The same thing, the same bone,
That [ye] this nexte folk han doon.'
'Fy on yow,' quod she, 'everichoon !
Ye masty swyn, ye ydel wrecches,
Ful of roten slowe tecches !
What ? false theves ! wher ye wolde
Be famous good, and no-thing nolde
Deserve why, ne never roughte ?
Men rather yow to-hangen oughte !
For ye be lyk the sweynte cat,
That wolde have fish ; but wostow what ?
He wolde no-thing wete his clowes.
Yvel thrift come on your jowes,
And eek on myn, if I hit graunte,
Or do yow favour, yow to avaunte !
Thou Eolus, thou king of Trace !
Go, blow this folk a sory grace,'
Quod she, 'anoon ; and wostow how ?
As I shal telle thee right now ;
Sey : "These ben they that wolde honour

Have, and do noskinnes labour,
Ne do no good, and yit han laude;
And that men wende that bele Isaude
Ne coude hem noght of love werne;
And yit she that grint at a querne
Is al to good to ese hir herte."'
This Eolus anon up sterte,
And with his blakke clarioun
He gan to blasen out a soun,
As loude as belweth wind in helle.
And eek therwith, [the] sooth to telle,
This soun was [al] so ful of japes,
As ever mowes were in apes.
And that wente al the world aboute,
That every wight gan on hem shoute,
And for to laughe as they were wode;
Such game fonde they in hir hode.
Tho com another companye,
That had y-doon the traiterye,
The harm, the gretest wikkednesse
That any herte couthe gesse;
And preyed hir to han good fame,
And that she nolde hem doon no shame,
And yeve hem loos and good renoun,
And do hit blowe in clarioun.
'Nay, wis!' quod she, 'hit were a vyce;
Al be ther in me no justyce,
Me listeth not to do hit now,
Ne this nil I not graunte you.'
Tho come ther lepinge in a route,
And gonne choppen al aboute
Every man upon the croune,
That al the halle gan to soune,
And seyden: 'Lady, lefe and dere,
We ben swich folk as ye mowe here.
To tellen al the tale aright,
We ben shrewes, every wight,
And han delyt in wikkednesse,
As gode folk han in goodnesse;
And joye to be knowen shrewes,

And fulle of vyce and wikked thewes;
Wherfor we preyen yow, a-rowe,
That our fame swich be knowe
In alle thing right as hit is.'
'I graunte hit yow,' quod she, 'y-wis.
But what art thou that seyst this tale,
That werest on thy hose a pale,
And on thy tipet swiche a belle!'
'Madame,' quod he, 'sooth to telle,
I am that ilke shrewe, y-wis,
That brende the temple of Isidis
In Athenes, lo, that citee.'
'And wherfor didest thou so?' quod she.
'By my thrift,' quod he, 'madame,
I wolde fayn han had a fame,
As other folk hadde in the toun,
Al-thogh they were of greet renoun
For hir vertu and for hir thewes;
Thoughte I, as greet a fame han shrewes,
Thogh hit be but for shrewednesse,
As gode folk han for goodnesse;
And sith I may not have that oon,
That other nil I noght for-goon.
And for to gette of Fames hyre,
The temple sette I al a-fyre.
Now do our loos be blowen swythe,
As wisly be thou ever blythe.'
'Gladly,' quod she; 'thou Eolus,
Herestow not what they preyen us?'
'Madame, yis, ful wel,' quod he,
'And I wil trumpen hit, parde!'
And tok his blakke trumpe faste,
And gan to puffen and to blaste,
Til hit was at the worldes ende.
With that I gan aboute wende;
For oon that stood right at my bak,
Me thoughte, goodly to me spak,
And seyde: 'Frend, what is thy name?
Artow come hider to han fame?'
'Nay, for-sothe, frend!' quod I;

'I cam noght hider, graunt mercy!
For no swich cause, by my heed!
Suffyceth me, as I were deed,
That no wight have my name in honde.
I woot my-self best how I stonde;
For what I drye or what I thinke,
I wol my-selven al hit drinke,
Certeyn, for the more part,
As ferforth as I can myn art.'
'But what dost thou here than?' quod he.
Quod I, 'that wol I tellen thee,
The cause why I stondë here:—
Som newe tydings for to lere:—
Som newe thinges, I not what,
Tydinges, other this or that,
Of love, or swiche thinges glade.
For certeynly, he that me made
To comen hider, seyde me
I shulde bothe here and see,
In this place, wonder thinges;
But these be no swiche tydinges
As I mene of.' 'No?' quod he.
And I answerde, 'No, pardee!
For wel I wiste, ever yit,
Sith that first I hadde wit,
That som folk han desyred fame
Dyversly, and loos, and name;
But certeynly, I niste how
Ne wher that Fame dwelte, er now;
Ne eek of hir descripcioun,
Ne also hir condicioun,
Ne the ordre of hir dome,
Unto the tyme I hider come.'
'Whiche be, lo, these tydinges,
That thou now [thus] hider bringes,
That thou hast herd?' quod he to me;
'But now, no fors; for wel I see
What thou desyrest for to here.
Com forth, and stond no longer here,
And I wol thee, with-outen drede,

In swich another place lede,
Ther thou shalt here many oon.'
Tho gan I forth with him to goon
Out of the castel, soth to seye.
Tho saugh I stonde in a valeye,
Under the castel, faste by,
An hous, that *domus Dedali*,
That *Laborintus* cleped is,
Nas maad so wonderliche, y-wis,
Ne half so queynteliche y-wrought.
And evermo, so swift as thought,
This queynte hous aboute wente,
That never-mo hit stille stente.
And ther-out com so greet a noise,
That, had hit stonden upon Oise,
Men mighte hit han herd esely
To Rome, I trowe sikerly.
And the noyse which that I herde,
For al the world right so hit ferde,
As doth the routing of the stoon
That from th'engyn is leten goon.
And al this hous, of whiche I rede,
Was made of twigges, falwe, rede,
And grene eek, and som weren whyte,
Swiche as men to these cages thwyte,
Or maken of these paniers,
Or elles hottes or dossers;
That, for the swough and for the twigges,
This hous was also ful of gigges,
And also ful eek of chirkinges,
And of many other werkinges;
And eek this hous hath of entrees
As fele as leves been on trees
In somer, whan they grene been;
And on the roof men may yit seen
A thousand holes, and wel mo,
To leten wel the soun out go.
And by day, in every tyde,
Ben al the dores open wyde,
And by night, echoon, unshette;

Ne porter ther is non to lette
No maner tydings in to pace ;
Ne never reste is in that place,
That hit nis fild ful of tydinges,
Other loude, or of whispringes ;
And, over alle the houses angles,
Is ful of rouninges and of jangles
Of werre, of pees, of mariages,
Of reste, of labour of viages,
Of abood, of deeth, of lyfe,
Of love, of hate, acorde, of stryfe.
Of loos, of lore, and of winninges,
Of hele, of sekenesse, of bildinges,
Of faire windes, of tempestes,
Of qualme of folk, and eek of bestes ;
Of dyvers transmutaciouns
Of estats, and eek of regiouns ;
Of trust, of drede, of jelousye,
Of wit, of winninge, of folye ;
Of plentee, and of greet famyne,
Of chepe, of derth, and of ruyne ;
Of good or mis governement,
Of fyr, of dyvers accident.
And lo, this hous, of which I wryte,
Siker be ye, hit nas not lyte ;
For hit was sixty myle of lengthe ;
Al was the timber of no strengthe,
Yet hit is founded to endure
Whyl that it list to Aventure,
That is the moder of tydinges,
As the see of welles and springes,—
And hit was shapen lyk a cage.
'Certes,' quod I, 'in al myn age,
Ne saugh I swich a hous as this.'
And as I wondred me, y-wis,
Upon this hous, tho war was I
How that myn egle, faste by,
Was perched hye upon a stoon ;
And I gan streighte to him goon
And seyde thus : 'I preye thee

That thou a whyl abyde me
For goddes love, and let me seen
What wondres in this place been;
For yit, paraventure, I may lere
Som good ther-on, or sumwhat here
That leef me were, or that I wente.'
'Peter! that is myn entente,
Quod he to me; 'therfor I dwelle;
But certein, oon thing I thee telle,
That, but I bringe thee ther-inne,
Ne shalt thou never cunne ginne
To come in-to hit, out of doute,
So faste hit whirleth, lo, aboute.
But sith that Joves, of his grace,
As I have seyd, wol thee solace
Fynally with swiche thinges,
Uncouthe sightes and tydinges,
To passe with thyn hevinesse;
Suche routhe hath he of thy distresse,
That thou suffrest debonairly—
And wost thy-selven utterly
Disesperat of alle blis,
Sith that Fortune hath maad a-mis
The fruit of al thyn hertes reste
Languisshe and eek in point to breste—
That he, through his mighty meryte,
Wol do thee ese, al be hit lyte,
And yaf expres commaundement,
To whiche I am obedient,
To furthre thee with al my might,
And wisse and teche thee aright
Wher thou maist most tydinges here;
Shaltow anoon heer many oon lere.'
With this worde he, right anoon,
Hente me up bitwene his toon,
And at a windowe in me broghte,
That in this hous was, as me thoghte—
And ther-withal, me thoghte hit steute,
And no-thing hit aboute wente—
And me sette in the flore adoun.

But which a congregacioun
Of folk, as I saugh rome aboute,
Some within and some withoute,
Nas never seen, ne shal ben eft;
That, certes, in the world nis left
So many formed by Nature,
Ne deed so many a creature;
That wel unethe, in that place,
Hadde I oon foot-brede of space;
And every wight that I saugh there
Rouned ech in otheres ere
A newe tyding prevely,
Or elles tolde al openly
Right thus, and seyde: 'Nost not thou
That is betid, lo, late or now?'
'No,' quod the other, 'tel me what';—
And than he tolde him this and that,
And swoor ther-to that hit was sooth—
'Thus hath he seyd'—and 'Thus he dooth'—
'Thus shal hit be'—'Thus herde I seye'—
'That shal be found'—'That dar I leye':—
That al the folk that is a-lyve
Ne han the cunning to discryve
The thinges that I herde there,
What aloude, and what in ere.
But al the wonder-most was this:—
Whan oon had herd a thing, y-wis,
He com forth to another wight,
And gan him tellen, anoon-right,
The same that to him was told,
Or hit a furlong-way was old,
But gan somwhat for to eche
To this tyding in this speche
More than hit ever was.
And nat so sone departed nas
That he fro him, that he ne mette
With the thridde; and, or he lette
Any stounde, he tolde him als;
Were the tyding sooth or fals,
Yit wolde he telle hit nathelees,

And evermo with more encrees
Than hit was erst. Thus north and southe
Went every word fro mouth to mouthe,
And that encresing ever-mo,
As fyr is wont to quikke and go
From a sparke spronge amis,
Til al a citee brent up is.
And, whan that was ful y-spronge,
And woxen more on every tonge
Than ever hit was, hit wente anoon
Up to a windowe, out to goon;
Or, but hit mightë out ther pace,
Hit gan out crepe at som crevace,
And fleigh forth faste for the nones.
And somtyme saugh I tho, at ones,
A lesing and a sad soth-sawe,
That gonne of aventure drawe
Out at a windowe for to pace;
And, when they metten in that place,
They were a-chekked bothe two,
And neither of hem moste out go;
For other so they gonne croude,
Til eche of hem gan cryen loude,
'Lat me go first!' 'Nay, but lat me!
And here I wol ensuren thee
With the nones that thou wolt do so,
That I shal never fro thee go,
But be thyn owne sworen brother!
We wil medle us ech with other,
That no man, be he never so wrothe,
Shal han that oon of two, but bothe
At ones, al beside his leve,
Come we a-morwe or on eve,
Be we cryed or stille y-rouned.'
Thus saugh I fals and sooth compouned
Togeder flee for oo tydinge.
Thus out at holes gonne wringe
Every tyding streight to Fame;
And she gan yeven eche his name,
After hir disposicioun,

And yaf hem eek duracioun,
Some to wexe and wane sone,
As dooth the faire whyte mone,
And leet hem gon. Ther mighte I seen
Wenged wondres faste fleen,
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Eolus hem blew aboute.
And, lord! this hous, in alle tymes,
Was ful of shipmen and pilgrymes,
With scrippes bret-ful of lesinges,
Entremedled with tydinges,
And eek alone by hem-selve.
O, many a thousand tymes twelve
Saugh I eek of these pardoneres,
Currours, and eek messangeres,
With boistes crammed ful of lyes
As ever vessel was with lyes.
And as I alther-fastest wente
Aboute, and dide al myn entente
Me for to pleye and for to lere,
And eek a tyding for to here,
That I had herd of som contree
That shal not now be told for me;—
For hit no nede is, redely;
Folk can singe hit bet than I;
For al mot out, other late or rathe,
Alle the sheves in the lathe;—
I herde a gret noise withalle
In a corner of the halle,
Ther men of love tydings tolde,
And I gan thiderward beholde;
For I saugh renninge every wight,
As faste as that they hadden might;
And everich cryed, 'What thing is that?'
And som seyde I not never what.
And whan they were alle on an hepe,
Tho behinde gonne up lepe,
And clamben up on othere faste,
And up the nose on hye caste,
And troden faste on othere heles

And stampe, as men don after eles.
Atte laste I saugh a man,
Which that I [nevene] naught ne can;
But he semed for to be
A man of greet auctoritee . .

(*Unfinished*)

THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN

TEXT A

Earlier Version

The prologe of .ix. goode Wimmen

A thousand sythes have I herd men telle,
That ther is joye in heven, and peyne in helle;
And I acorde wel that hit be so;
But natheles, this wot I wel also,
That ther nis noon that dwelleth in this contree,
That either hath in helle or heven y-be,
Ne may of hit non other weyes witen,
But as he hath herd seyd, or founde hit writen;
For by assay ther may no man hit preve.
But goddes forbode, but men shulde leve
Wel more thing then men han seen with yë!
Men shal nat wenen every-thing a lyë
For that he seigh it nat of yore ago.
God wot, a thing is never the lesse so
Thogh every wight ne may hit nat y-see.
Bernard the monk ne saugh nat al, parde!
Than mote we to bokes that we finde,
Through which that olde thinges been in minde,
And to the doctrine of these olde wyse,
Yeven credence, in every skilful wyse,
And trowen on these olde aproved stories
Of holinesse, of regnes, of victories,
Of love, of hate, of other sundry thinges,
Of whiche I may not maken rehersinges.

And if that olde bokes were a-weye,
Y-loren were of remembraunce the keye.
Wel oghte us than on olde bokes leve,
Ther-as ther is non other assay by preve.
And, as for me, though that my wit be lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence;
And to hem yeve swich lust and swich credence,
That ther is wel unethe game noon
That from my bokes make me to goon,
But hit be other up-on the haly-day,
Or elles in the joly tyme of May;
Whan that I here the smale foules singe,
And that the floures ginne for to springe,
Farwel my studie, as lasting that sesoun!
Now have I therto this condicioun
That, of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures whyte and rede,
Swiche as men callen daysies in our toun.
To hem have I so greet affeccioun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth me no day
That I nam up, and walking in the mede
To seen these floures agein the sonne sprede,
Whan it up-riseth by the morwe shene,
The longe day, thus walking in the grene.
And whan the sonne ginneth for to weste,
Than closeth hit, and draweth hit to reste.
So sore hit is afered of the night,
Til on the morwe, that hit is dayes light.
This dayesye, of alle floures flour,
Fulfild of vertu and of alle honour,
And ever y-lyke fair and fresh of hewe,
As wel in winter as in somer newe,
Fain wolde I preisen, if I coude aright;
But wo is me, hit lyth nat in my might!
For wel I wot, that folk han her-beforn
Of making ropen, and lad a-wey the corn;
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am ful glad if I may finde an ere

Of any goodly word that they han left.
And, if hit happe me rehersen eft
That they han in her fresshe songes sayd,
I hope that they wil nat ben evel apayd,
Sith hit is seid in forthering and honour
Of hem that either serven leef or flour.
For trusteth wel, I ne have nat undertake
As of the leef, ageyn the flour, to make;
Ne of the flour to make, ageyn the leef,
No more than of the corn ageyn the sheef.
For, as to me, is leefer noon ne lother;
I am with-holde yit with never nother.
I not who serveth leef, ne who the flour;
That nis nothing the entent of my labour.
For this werk is al of another tunne,
Of olde story, er swich stryf was begunne.
But wherfor that I spak, to yeve credence
To bokes olde and doon hem reverence,
Is for men shulde autoritees beleve,
Ther as ther lyth non other assay by preve.
For myn entent is, or I fro yow fare,
The naked text in English to declare
Of many a story, or elles of many a geste,
As autours seyn; leveth hem if yow leste!
Whan passed was almost the month of May,
And I had romed, al the someres day,
The grene medew, of which that I yow tolde,
Upon the fresshe daysy to beholde,
And that the sonne out of the south gan weste,
And closed was the flour and goon to reste
For derknesse of the night, of which she dredde,
Hoom to myn hous ful swiftly I me spedde;
And, in a litel erber that I have,
Y-benched newe with turves fresshe y-grave,
I bad men shulde me my couche make;
For deyntee of the newe someres sake,
I bad hem strowe floures on my bed.
Whan I was layd, and had myn eyen hed,
I fel a-slepe with-in an houre or two.
Me mette how I was in the medew tho,

And that I romed in that same gyse,
To seen that flour, as ye han herd devyse.
Fair was this medew, as thoughte me overal;
With floures swote enbrowded was it al;
As for to speke of gomme, or erbe, or tree,
Comparisoun may noon y-maked be.
For hit surmounted pleynly alle odoures,
And eek of riche beaute alle floures.
Forgeten had the erthe his pore estat
Of winter, that him naked made and mat,
And with his swerd of cold so sore had greved.
Now had the atempre sonne al that releved,
And clothed him in grene al newe agayn.
The smale foules, of the seson fayn,
That from the panter and the net ben scaped,
Upon the fouler, that hem made a-whaped
In winter, and distroyed had hir brood,
In his despyt, hem thoughte hit did hem good
To singe of him, and in hir song despyse
The foule cherl that, for his covetyse,
Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.
This was hir song—'the fouler we defye!'
Somme songen [layes] on the braunches clere
Of love and [May], that joye hit was to here,
In worship and in preysing of hir make,
And of the newe blisful someres sake,
That songen, 'blissed be seynt Valentyn!
[For] at his day I chees yow to be myn,
With-oute repenting, myn herte swete!'
And therwith-al hir bekes gonnen mete.
They dide honour and humble obeisaunces,
And after diden other observaunces
Right [plesing] un-to love and to nature;
So ech of hem [doth wel] to creature.
This song to herkne I dide al myn entente,
For-why I mette I wiste what they mente.
Til at the laste a larke song above:
'I see,' quod she, 'the mighty god of love!
Lo! yond he cometh, I see his winges sprede!'
Tho gan I loken endelong the mede,

And saw him come, and in his hond a quene,
Clothed in ryal abite al of grene.
A fret of gold she hadde next hir heer,
And up-on that a whyt coroun she beer
With many floures, and I shal nat lye;
For al the world, right as the dayesye
I-coroned is with whyte leves lyte,
Swich were the floures of hir coroun whyte.
For of o perle fyn and oriental
Hir whyte coroun was y-maked al;
For which the whyte coroun, above the grene,
Made hir lyk a daysie for to sene,
Considered eek the fret of gold above.
Y-clothed was this mighty god of love
Of silk, y-brouded ful of grene greves;
A garlond on his heed of rose-leves
Steked al with lilie floures newe;
But of his face I can nat seyn the hewe.
For sekirly his face shoon so brighte,
That with the gleem a-stoned was the sighte;
A furlong-wey I mighte him nat beholde.
But at the laste in hande I saw him holde
Two fyry dartes, as the gledes rede;
And aungellich his wenges gan he sprede.
And al be that men seyn that blind is he,
Al-gate me thoughte he mighte wel y-see;
For sternely on me he gan biholde,
So that his loking doth myn herte colde.
And by the hande he held the noble quene,
Corouned with whyte, and clothed al in grene,
So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
That in this world, thogh that men wolde seke,
Half hir beautee shulde men nat finde
In creature that formed is by kinde,
Hir name was Alceste the debonayre;
I prey to god that ever falle she fayre!
For ne hadde confort been of hir presence,
I had be deed, withouten any defence,
For drede of Loves wordes and his chere,
As, whan tyme is, her-after ye shal here.

Byhind this god of love, up-on this grene,
I saw cominge of ladyës nyntene
In ryal abite, a ful esy pas,
And after hem com of wemen swich a tras
That, sin that god Adam made of erthe,
The thredde part of wemen, ne the ferthe,
Ne wende I nat by possibilitee
Hadden ever in this world y-be;
And trewe of love thise wemen were echoon.
Now whether was that a wonder thing or noon,
That, right anoon as that they gonne espye
This flour, which that I clepe the dayesye,
Ful sodeinly they stinten alle at-ones,
And kneled adoun, as it were for the nones.
And after that they wenten in compas,
Daunsinge aboute this flour an esy pas,
And songen, as it were in carole-wyse,
This balade, which that I shal yow devyse.

Balade

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al a-doun;
Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere;
Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;
Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Thy faire bodye, lat hit nat appere,
Lavyne; and thou, Lucresse of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boghte love so dere,
Eek Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hyde ye your trouthe in love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle in-fere,
Eek Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun,

And Canace, espyed by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun,
Mak of your trouthe in love no bost ne soun ;
Nor Ypermistre or Adriane, ne pleyne ;
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Whan that this balade al y-songen was,
Upon the softe and swote grene gras,
They setten hem ful softely adoun,
By ordre alle in compas, alle enveroun.
First sat the god of love, and than this quene
With the whyte coroun, clad in grene ;
And sithen al the remenant by and by,
As they were of degree, ful curteisly ;
Ne nat a word was spoken in the place
The mountance of a furlong-wey of space.
I, lening faste by under a bente,
Abood, to knowen what this peple mente,
As stille as any stoon ; til at the laste,
The god of love on me his eye caste,
And seyde, 'who resteth ther?' and I answerde
Un-to his axing, whan that I him herde,
And seyde, 'sir, hit am I'; and cam him neer,
And salued him. Quod he, 'what dostow heer
In my presence, and that so boldely?
For it were better worthy, trewely,
A werm to comen in my sight than thou.'
'And why, sir,' quod I, 'and hit lyke yow?'
'For thou,' quod he, 'art ther-to nothing able.
My servaunts been alle wyse and honourable.
Thou art my mortal fo, and me warreyest,
And of myne olde servaunts thou misseyest,
And hinderest hem, with thy translacioun,
And lettest folk to han devocioun
To serven me, and haldest hit folye
To troste on me. Thou mayst hit nat denye ;
For in pleyn text, hit nedeth nat to glose,
Thou hast translated the Romauns of the Rose,
That is an heresye ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.

And thinkest in thy wit, that is ful cool,
That he nis but a verray propre fool
That loveth paramours, to harde and hote.
Wel wot I ther-by thou beginnest dote
As olde foles, whan hir spirit fayleth;
Than blame they folk, and wite nat what hem ayleth.
Hast thou nat mad in English eek the book
How that Crisseyde Troilus forsook,
In shewinge how that wemen had don mis?
But natheles, answere me now to this,
Why noldest thou as wel han seyd goodnesse
Of wemen, as thou hast seyd wikkednesse?
Was ther no good matere in thy minde,
Ne in alle thy bokes coudest thou nat finde
Sum story of wemen that were goode and trewe?
Yis! god wot, sixty bokes olde and newe
Hast thou thy-self, alle fulle of stories grete,
That bothe Romains and eek Grekes trete
Of sundry wemen, which lyf that they ladde,
And ever an hundred gode ageyn oon badde.
This knoweth god, and alle clerkes eke,
That usen swiche materes for to seke.
What seith Valerie, Titus, or Claudian?
What seith Jerome ageyns Jovinian?
How clene maydens, and how trewe wyves,
How stedfast widwes during al hir lyves,
Telleth Jerome; and that nat of a fewe,
But, I dar seyn, an hundred on a rewe;
That hit is pitee for to rede, and routhe,
The wo that they enduren for hir trouthe.
For to hir love were they so trewe,
That, rather than they wolde take a newe,
They chosen to be dede in sundry wyse,
And deyden, as the story wol devyse;
And some were brend, and some were cut the hals,
And some dreynt, for they wolden nat be fals.
For alle keped they hir maydenhed,
Or elles wedlok, or hir widwehed.
And this thing was nat kept for holinesse,
But al for verray vertu and clennesse,

And for men shulde sette on hem no lak ;
And yit they weren hethen, al the pak,
That were so sore adrad of alle shame.
These olde wemen kepte so hir name,
That in this world I trow men shal nat finde
A man that coude be so trewe and kinde,
As was the leste woman in that tyde.
What seith also the epistels of Ovyde
Of trewe wyves, and of hir labour?
What Vincent, in his Storial Mirour?
Eek al the world of autours maystow here,
Cristen and hethen, trete of swich matere ;
It nedeth nat alday thus for t'endyte.
But yit I sey, what eyleth thee to wryte
The draf of stories, and forgo the corn?
By seint Venus, of whom that I was born,
Although [that] thou reneyed hast my lay,
As othere olde foles many a day,
Thou shalt repente hit, that hit shal be sene !
Than spak Alceste, the worthieste quene,
And seyde, 'god, right of your curtesye,
Ye moten herknen if he can replye
Ageyns these points that ye han to him meved ;
A god ne sholde nat be thus agreved,
But of his deitee he shal be stable,
And therto rightful and eek merciable.
He shal nat rightfully his yre wreke
Or he have herd the tother party speke.
Al ne is nat gospel that is to yow pleyned ;
The god of love herth many a tale y-feyned.
For in your court is many a losengeour,
And many a queynte totelere accusour,
That tabouren in your eres many a thing
For hate, or for jelous imagining,
And for to han with yow som daliaunce.
Envye (I prey to god yeve hir mischaunce !)
Is lavender in the grete court alway.
For she ne parteth, neither night ne day,
Out of the hous of Cesar ; thus seith Dante ;
Who-so that goth, alwey she moot [nat] wante.

This man to yow may wrongly been accused,
Ther as by right him oghte been excused.
Or elles, sir, for that this man is nyce,
He may translate a thing in no malyce,
But for he useth bokes for to make,
And takth non heed of what matere he take ;
Therfor he wroot the Rose and eek Crisseyde
Of innocence, and niste what he seyde ;
Or him was boden make thilke tweye
Of som persone, and durste hit nat withseye ;
For he hath writen many a book er this.
He ne hath nat doon so grevously amis
To translaten that olde clerkes wryten,
As thogh that he of malice wolde endyten
Despyt of love, and hadde him-self y-wroght.
This shulde a rightwys lord han in his thoght,
And nat be lyk tiraunts of Lumbardye,
That usen wilfulhed and tirannye,
For he that king or lord is naturel,
Him oghte nat be tiraunt ne cruel,
As is a fermour, to doon the harm he can.
He moste thinke hit is his lige man,
And that him oweth, of verray duetee,
Shewen his peple pleyn benignitee,
And wel to here hir excusaciouns,
And hir compleyntes and peticiouns,
In duewe tyme, whan they shal hit profre.
This is the sentence of the philosophre :
A king to kepe his liges in justyce ;
With-outen doute, that is his offyce.
And therto is a king ful depe y-sworn,
Ful many an hundred winter heer-biforn ;
And for to kepe his lordes hir degree,
As hit is right and skilful that they be
Enhaunced and honoured, and most dere—
For they ben half-goddes in this world here—
This shal he doon, bothe to pore [and] riche,
Al be that her estat be nat a-liche,
And han of pore folk compassioun.
For lo, the gentil kind of the lioun !

For whan a flye offendeth him or byteth,
He with his tayl awey the flye smyteth
Al esily ; for, of his genterye,
Him deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye,
As doth a curre or elles another beste.
In noble corage oghte been areste,
And weyen every thing by equitee,
And ever han reward to his owen degree.
For, sir, hit is no maystrie for a lord
To dampne a man with-oute answere or word ;
And, for a lord, that is ful foul to use.
And if so be he may him nat excuse,
[But] axeth mercy with a sorweful herte,
And profreth him, right in his bare sherte,
To been right at your owne jugement,
Than oghte a god, by short avysement,
Considre his owne honour and his trespas.
For sith no cause of deeth lyth in this cas,
Yow oghte been the lighter merciable ;
Leteth your yre, and beth somwhat tretable !
The man hath served yow of his conning,
And forthered your lawe with his making.
Whyl he was yong, he kepte your estat ;
I not wher he be now a renegat.
But wel I wot, with that he can endyte,
He hath maked lewed folk delyte
To serve you, in preysing of your name.
He made the book that hight the Hous of Fame,
And eek the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the love of Palamon and Arcyte
Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte ;
And many an ympne for your halydayes,
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes ;
And for to speke of other besinesse,
He hath in prose translated Boëce ;
And of the Wreched Engendring of Mankinde,
As man may in pope Innocent y-finde ;
And mad the Lyf also of seynt Cecyle ;
He made also, goon sithen a greet whyl,

Origenes upon the Maudeleyne ;
Him oghte now to have the lesse peyne ;
He hath mad many a lay and many a thing.
'Now as ye been a god, and eek a king,
I, your Alceste, whylom quene of Trace,
I axe yow this man, right of your grace,
That ye him never hurte in al his lyve ;
And he shal sweren yow, and that as blyve,
He shal no more agilten in this wyse ;
But he shal maken, as ye wil devyse,
Of wemen trewe in lovinge al hir lyve,
Where-so ye wil, of maiden or of wyve,
And forthren yow, as muche as he misseyde
Or in the Rose or elles in Criseyde.'
The god of love answerde hir thus anoon,
'Madame,' quod he, 'hit is so long agoon
That I yow knew so charitable and trewe,
That never yit, sith that the world was newe,
To me ne fond I better noon than ye.
That, if that I wol save my degree,
I may ne wol nat warne your requeste ;
Al lyth in yow, doth with him what yow leste,
And al foryeve, with-outen lenger space ;
For who-so yeveth a yift, or doth a grace,
Do hit by tyme, his thank is wel the more ;
And demeth ye what he shal do therfore.
Go thanke now my lady heer,' quod he.
I roos, and doun I sette me on my knee,
And seyde thus : 'Madame, the god above
Foryelde yow, that ye the god of love
Han maked me his wrathe to foryive ;
And yeve me grace so long for to live,
That I may knowe soothly what ye be,
That han me holpen, and put in swich degree.
But trewely I wende, as in this cas,
Naught have agilt, ne doon to love trespas.
Forwhy a trewe man, with-outen drede,
Hath nat to parten with a theves dede ;
Ne a trewe lover oghte me nat blame,
Thogh that I speke a fals lover som shame.

They oghte rather with me for to holde,
For that I of Creseyde wroot or tolde,
Or of the Rose ; what-so myn auctour mente,
Algate, god wot, hit was myn entente
To forthren trouthe in love and hit cheryce ;
And to be war fro falsnesse and fro vyce
By swich ensample ; this was my meninge.'
And she answerde, 'lat be thyn arguinge ;
For Love ne wol nat countrepleted be
In right ne wrong ; and lerne this at me !
Thou hast thy grace, and hold thee right ther-to.
Now wol I seyn what penance thou shalt do
For thy trespas, and understond hit here :
Thou shalt, whyl that thou livest, yeer by yere,
The moste party of thy lyve spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Gode Wemen, maidenes and wyves,
That were trewe in lovinge al hir lyves ;
And telle of false men that hem bitrayen,
That al hir lyf ne doon nat but assayen
How many wemen they may doon a shame ;
For in your world that is now holden game.
And thogh thee lesteth nat a lover be,
Spek wel of love ; this penance yeve I thee.
And to the god of love I shal so preye,
That he shal charge his servants, by any weye
To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quyte ;
Go now thy wey, thy penance is hut lyte.'
The god of love gan smyle, and than he seyde,
'Wostow,' quod he, 'wher this be wyf or mayde,
Or quene, or countesse, or of what degree,
That hath so litel penance yeven thee,
That hast deserved sorer for to smerte ?
But pitee renneth sone in gentil herte ;
That mayst thou seen, she kytheth what she is.'
And I answerde, 'nay, sir, so have I blis,
No more but that I see wel she is good.'
'That is a trewe tale, by myn hood,'
Quod Love, 'and that thou knowest wel, pardee,
If hit be so that thou avyse thee.

Hastow nat in a book, lyth in thy cheste,
The gret goodnesse of the quene Alceste,
That turned was into a dayesye:
She that for hir husbonde chees to dye,
And eek to goon to helle, rather than he,
And Ercules rescued hir, pardee,
And broghte hir out of helle agayn to blis?'
And I answerde ageyn, and seyde, 'yis,
Now knowe I hir! And is this good Alceste,
The dayesye, and myn owne hertes reste?
Now fele I wel the goodnesse of this wyf,
That bothe after hir deeth, and in hir lyf,
Hir grete bountee doubleth hir renoun!
Wel hath she quit me myn affeccioun
That I have to hir flour, the dayesye!
No wonder is thogh Jove hir stellifye,
As telleth Agaton, for hir goodnesse!
Hir whyte coroun berth of hit witnesse;
For also many vertues hadde she,
As smale floures in hir coroun be.
In remembraunce of hir and in honour,
Cibella made the dayesy and the flour
Y-coroned al with whyt, as men may see;
And Mars yaf to hir coroun reed, pardee,
In stede of rubies, set among the whyte.'
Therwith this quene wex reed for shame a lyte,
Whan she was preysed so in hir presence.
Than seyde Love, 'a ful gret negligence
Was hit to thee, to write unstedfastnesse
Of women, sith thou knowest hir goodnesse
By preef, and eek by stories heer-biforn;
Let be the chaf, and wryt wel of the corn.
Why noldest thou han writen of Alceste,
And leten Criseide been a-slepe and reste?
For of Alceste shulde thy wryting be,
Sin that thou wost that kalender is she
Of goodnesse, for she taughte of fyn lovinge,
And namely of wyfhood the livinge,
And alle the boundes that she oghte kepe;
Thy litel wit was thilke tyme a-slepe

But now I charge thee, upon thy lyf,
That in thy Legend thou make of this wyf,
Whan thou hast othere smale maad before ;
And fare now wel, I charge thee no more.
At Cleopatre I wol that thou beginne ;
And so forth ; and my love so shalt thou winne.'
And with that word of sleep I gan a-awake,
And right thus on my Legend gan I make.

Explicit prohemium

TEXT B

Later Version

The prologe of .ix. goode Wimmen

A thousand tymes have I herd men telle,
That ther is joye in heven, and peyne in helle;
And I acorde wel that hit is so;
But natheles, yit wot I wel also,
That ther nis noon dwelling in this contree,
That either hath in heven or helle y-be,
Ne may of hit non other weyes witen,
But as he hath herd seyd, or founde hit writen;
For by assay ther may no man hit preve.
But god forbede but men shulde leve
Wel more thing then men han seen with yë!
Men shal nat wenen every-thing a lyë
But-if him-self hit seeth, or elles dooth;
For, god wot, thing is never the lasse sooth,
Thogh every wight ne may hit nat y-see.
Bernard the monk ne saugh nat al, parde!
Than mote we to bokes that we finde,
Through which that olde thinges been in minde,
And to the doctrine of these olde wyse,
Yeve credence, in every skilful wyse,
That tellen of these olde appreved stories,
Of holinesse, of regnes, of victories,
Of love, of hate, of other sundry thinges,
Of whiche I may not maken rehersinges.
And if that olde bokes were a-weye,
Y-loren were of remembraunce the keye.

Wel oghte us than honouren and beleve
These bokes, ther we han non other preve.
And as for me, thogh that I can but lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
And to hem yeve I feyth and ful credence,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence
So hertely, that ther is game noon
That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,
But hit be seldom, on the holyday;
Save, certeynly, whan that the month of May
Is comen, and that I here the foules singe,
And that the floures ginnen for to springe,
Farwel my book and my devocioun!
Now have I than swich a condicioun,
That, of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures whyte and rede,
Swiche as men callen daysies in our toun.
To hem have I so greet affeccioun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth me no day
That I nam up, and walking in the mede
To seen this flour ageln the sonne sprede,
Whan hit upryseth erly by the morwe;
That blisful sighte softneth al my sorwe,
So glad am I whan that I have presence
Of hit, to doon al maner reverence,
As she, that is of alle floures flour,
Fulfilled of al vertu and honour,
And ever y-lyke fair, and fresh of hewe;
And I love hit, and ever y-lyke newe,
And ever shal, til that myn herte dye;
Al swere I nat, of this I wol nat lye,
Ther loved no wight hotter in his lyve.
And whan than hit is eve, I renne blyve,
As sone as ever the sonne ginneth weste,
To seen this flour, how it wol go to reste,
For fere of night, so hateth she derknesse!
Hir chere is pleynly sprad in the brightnesse
Of the sonne, for ther hit wol unclose.
Allas! that I ne had English, ryme or prose,

Suffisant this flour to preyse aright!
But helpeth, ye that han conning and might,
Ye lovers, that can make of sentement;
In this cas oghte ye be diligent
To forthren me somwhat in my labour,
Whether ye ben with the leef or with the flour.
For wel I wot, that ye han her-biforn
Of making ropen, and lad awey the corn;
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am ful glad if I may finde an ere
Of any goodly word that ye han left.
And thogh it happen me rehercen eft
That ye han in your fresshe songes sayd,
For-bereth me, and beth nat evel apayd,
Sin that ye see I do hit in the honour
Of love, and eek in service of the flour,
Whom that I serve as I have wit or might.
She is the clernesse and the verray light,
That in this derke worlde me wynt and ledeth,
The herte in-with my sorowful brest yow dredeth,
And loveth so sore, that ye ben verrayly
The maistresse of my wit, and nothing I..
My word, my werk, is knit so in your bonde,
That, as an harpe obeyeth to the honde
And maketh hit soune after his fingeringe,
Right so mowe ye out of myn herte bringe
Swich vois, right as yow list, to laughe or pleyne.
Be ye my gyde and lady sovereyne;
As to myn erthly god, to yow I calle,
Bothe in this werke and in my sorwes alle.
But wherfor that I spak, to give credence
To olde stories, and doon hem reverence,
And that men mosten more thing beleve
Then men may seen at eye or elles preve?
That shal I seyn, whan that I see my tyme;
I may not al at ones speke in ryme.
My besy gost, that thrusteth alwey newe
To seen this flour so yong, so fresh of hewe,
Constreyned me with so gledy desyr,
That in my herte I fele yit the fyr,

That made me to ryse er hit wer day—
And this was now the firste morwe of May—
With dredful herte and glad devocioun,
For to ben at the resurecciouu
Of this flour, whan that it shuld unclose
Agayn the sonne, that roos as rede as rose,
That in the brest was of the beste that day,
That Agenores doghter ladde away.
And doun on knees anon-right I me sette,
And, as I coude, this fresshe flour I grette;
Kneling alwey, til hit unclosed was,
Upon the smale softe swote gras,
That was with floures swote enbrouded al,
Of swich swetnesse and swich odour over-al,
That, for to speke of gomme, or herbe, or tree,
Comparisoun may noon y-maked be;
For hit surmounteth pleynly alle odoures,
And eek of riche beautee alle floures.
Forgeten had the erthe his pore estat
Of winter, that him naked made and mat,
And with his swerd of cold so sore greved;
Now hath the atempre sonne al that releved
That naked was, and clad hit new agayn.
The smale foules, of the seson fayn,
That from the panter and the net ben scaped,
Upon the fouler, that hem made a-whaped
In winter, and distroyed had hir brood,
In his despyt, hem thoughte hit did hem good
To singe of him, and in hir song despyse
The foule cherl that, for his covetyse,
Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.
This was hir song—'the fouler we defye,
And al his craft!' And somme songen clere
Layes of love, that joye hit was to here,
In worshipinge and preisinge of hir make.
And, for the newe blisful somers sake,
Upon the braunches ful of blosmes softe,
In hir delyt, they turned hem ful ofte,
And songen, 'blessed be seynt Valentyn!
For on his day I chees yow to be myn,

Withouten repenting, myn herte swete !'
And therwith-al hir bekes gonnen mete,
Yelding honour and humble obeisaunces
To love, and diden hir other observaunces
That longeth unto love and to nature ;
Construeth that as yow list, I do no cure.
And tho that hadde doon unkindenesse—
As dooth the tydif, for new-fangelnesse—
Besoghte mercy of hir trespassinge,
And humblely songen hir repentinge,
And sworen on the blosmes to be trewe,
So that hir makes wolde upon hem rewe,
And at the laste maden hir acord.
Al founde they Daunger for a tyme a lord,
Yet Pitee, through his stronge gentil might,
Forgaf, and made Mercy passen Right,
Through innocence and ruled curtesye.
But I ne clepe nat innocence folye,
Ne fals pitee, for 'vertu is the mene,'
As Etik saith, in swich manere I mene.
And thus thise foules, voide of al malyce,
Acordeden to love, and laften vyce
Of hate, and songen alle of oon acord,
'Welcome, somer, our governour and lord !'
And Zephirus and Flora gentilly
Yaf to the floures, softe and tenderly,
Hir swote breth, and made hem for to sprede,
As god and goddesse of the floury mede ;
In which me thoghte I mighte, day by day,
Dwellen alwey, the joly month of May,
Withouten sleep, withouten mete or drinke.
A-doun ful softely I gan to sinke ;
And, leninge on myn elbowe and my syde,
The longe day I shoop me for to abyde
For nothing elles, and I shal nat lye,
But for to loke upon the dayesye
That wel by reson men hit calle may
The 'dayesye' or elles the 'ye of day,'
The emperice and flour of floures alle.
I pray to god that faire mot she falle,

And alle that loven floures, for hir sake!
But natheles, ne wene nat that I make
In preysing of the flour agayn the leef,
No more than of the corn agayn the sheef:
For, as to me, nis lever noon ne lother;
I nam with-holden yit with never nother.
Ne I not who serveth leef, ne who the flour;
Wel brouken they hir service or labour;
For this thing is al of another tonne,
Of olde story, er swich thing was begonne.
Whan that the sonne out of the south gan weste,
And that this flour gan close and goon to reste
For derknesse of the night, the which she dredde,
Hoom to myn hous ful swiftly I me spedde
To goon to reste, and erly for to ryse,
To seen this flour to sprede, as I devyse.
And, in a litel herber that I have,
That benched was on turves fresshe y-grave,
I bad men sholde me my couche make;
For deyntee of the newe someres sake,
I bad hem strawen floures on my bed.
Whan I was leyd, and had myn eyen hed,
I fel on slepe in-with an houre or two;
Me mette how I lay in the medew tho,
To seen this flour that I so love and drede.
And from a-fer com walking in the mede
The god of love, and in his hande a quene;
And she was clad in real habit grene.
A fret of gold she hadde next hir heer,
And upon that a whyt coroun she beer
With florouns smale, and I shal nat lye;
For al the world, ryght as a dayesye
Y-corouned is with whyte leves lyte,
So were the florouns of hir coroun whyte.
For of o perle fyne, oriental,
Hir whyte coroun was y-maked al;
For which the whyte coroun, above the grene,
Made hir lyk a daysie for to sene,
Considered eek hir fret of gold above.
Y-clothed was this mighty god of love

In silke, enbrouded ful of grene greves,
In-with a fret of rede rose-leves,
The fresshest sin the world was first bigonne.
His gilte heer was corouned with a sonne,
In-stede of gold, for hevinesse and wighte;
Therwith me thoughte his face shoon so brighte
That wel unnethes mighte I him beholde;
And in his hande me thoughte I saugh him holde
Two fyry dartes, as the gledes rede;
And aungellyke his winges saugh I sprede.
And al be that men seyn that blind is he,
Al-gate me thoughte that he mighte see;
For sternely on me he gan biholde,
So that his loking doth myn herte colde.
And by the hande he held this noble quene,
Corouned with whyte, and clothed al in grene,
So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
That in this world, thogh that men wolde seke,
Half hir beautee shulde men nat finde
In creature that formed is by kinde.
And therfor may I seyn, as thinketh me,
This song, in preysing of this lady fre.

Balade

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al a-doun;
Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere;
Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;
Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Thy faire body, lat hit nat appere,
Lavyne; and thou, Lucresse of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boghten love so dere,
And Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hyde ye your trouthe of love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe, that hast of love swich peyne;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle y-fere,
And Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espyed by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betraysed with Jasoun,
Maketh of your trouthe neyther boost ne soun ;
Nor Ypermistre or Adriane, ye tweyne ;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

This balade may ful wel y-songen be,
As I have seyd erst, by my lady free ;
For certeynly, alle these mow nat suffyse
To apperen with my lady in no wyse.
For as the sonne wol the fyr disteyne,
So passeth al my lady sovereyne,
That is so good, so fair, so debonaire ;
I prey to god that ever falle hir faire !
For, nadde comfort been of hir presence,
I had ben deed, withouten any defence,
For drede of Loves wordes and his chere ;
As, when tyme is, her-after ye shal here.
Behind this god of love, upon the grene,
I saugh cominge of ladyës nyntene
In real habit, a ful esy paas ;
And after hem com of women swich a traas,
That, sin that god Adam had maad of erthe,
The thridde part of mankynd, or the ferthe,
Ne wende I nat by possibilitee,
Had ever in this wyde worlde y-be ;
And trewe of love thise women were echoon.
Now whether was that a wonder thing or noon,
That, right anoon as that they gonne espye
This flour, which that I clepe the dayesye,
Ful sodeinly they stinten alle at ones,
And kneled doun, as it were for the nones,
And songen with o vois, ' Hele and honour
To trouthe of womanhede, and to this flour
That berth our alder prys in figuringe !
Hir whyte coroun berth the witnessinge !'
And with that word, a-compas environn,
They setten hem ful softely adoun.

First sat the god of love, and sith his quene
With the whyte coroun, clad in grene;
And sithen al the remenant by and by,
As they were of estaat, ful curteisly;
Ne nat a word was spoken in the place
The mountance of a furlong-wey of space.
I kneling by this flour, in good entente
Abood, to knowen what this peple mente,
As stille as any stoon; til at the laste,
This god of love on me his eyen caste,
And seyde, 'who kneleth ther?' and I answerde
Unto his asking, whan that I hit herde,
And seyde, 'sir, hit am I'; and com him neer,
And salued him. Quod he, 'what dostow heer
So nigh myn owne flour, so boldely?
For it were better worthy, trewely,
A worm to neghen neer my flour than thou.'
'And why, sir,' quod I, 'and hit lyke yow?'
'For thou,' quod he, 'art ther-to nothing able.
Hit is my relik, digne and delytable,
And thou my fo, and al my folk werreyest,
And of myn olde servaunts thou misseyest,
And hindrest hem, with thy translacioun,
And lettest folk from hir devocioun
To serve me, and holdest hit folye
To serve Love. Thou mayst hit nat denye;
For in pleyn text, with-outen nede of glose,
Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose,
That is an heresye ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.
And of Criseyde thou hast seyd as thee liste,
That maketh men to wommen lasse triste,
That ben as trewe as ever was any steel.
Of thyn answere avyse thee right weel;
For, thogh that thou reneyed hast my lay,
As other wrecches han doon many a day,
By seynt Venus, that my moder is,
If that thou live, thou shalt repenten this
So cruelly, that hit shal wel be sene!'
Tho spak this lady, clothed al in grene,

And seyde, 'god, right of your curtesye,
Ye moten herknen if he can replye
Agayns al this that ye han to him meved;
A god ne sholde nat be thus agreved,
But of his deitee he shal be stable,
And therto gracious and merciable.
And if ye nere a god, that knowen al,
Than mighte hit be, as I yow tellen shal,
This man to you may falsly been accused,
Ther as by right him oghte been excused;
For in your court is many a losengeour,
And many a queynte totelere accusour,
That tabouren in your eres many a soun,
Right after hir imaginacioun,
To have your daliance, and for envye;
These been the causes, and I shall nat lye.
Envye is lavender of the court alway;
For she ne parteth, neither night ne day,
Out of the hous of Cesar; thus seith Dante;
Who-so that goth, algate she wol nat wante.
And eek, paraunter, for this man is nyce,
He mighte doon hit, gessing no malyce,
But for he useth thinges for to make;
Him rekketh noght of what matere he take;
Or him was boden maken thilke tweye
Of som persone, and durste hit nat withseye;
Or him repenteth utterly of this.
He ne hath nat doon so grevously amis
To translaten that olde clerkes wryten,
As thogh that he of malice wolde endyten
Despyt of love, and had him-self hit wroght.
This shulde a rightwys lord have in his thoght,
And nat be lyk tiraunts of Lumbardye,
Than han no reward but at tirannye.
For he that king or lord is naturel,
Him oghte nat be tiraunt ne cruel,
As is a fermour, to doon the harm he can.
He moste thinke hit is his lige man,
And is his tresour, and his gold in cofre.
This is the sentence of the philosophre:

A king to kepe his liges in justyce ;
With-outen doute, that is his offyce.
Al wol he kepe his lordes hir degree,
As hit is right and skilful that they be
Enhaunced and honoured, and most dere—
For they ben half-goddes in this world here—
Yit mot he doon bothe right, to pore and riche,
Al be that hir estat be nat y-liche,
And han of pore folk compassioun.
For lo, the gentil kynd of the leoun !
For whan a flye offendeth him or byteth,
He with his tayl awey the flye smyteth
Al esily ; for, of his genterye,
Him deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye,
As doth a curre or elles another beste.
In noble corage oghte been areste,
And weyen every thing by equitee,
And ever han reward to his owen degree.
For, sir, hit is no maystrie for a lord
To dampne a man with-oute answere of word ;
And, for a lord, that is ful foul to use.
And if so be he may him nat excuse,
But asketh mercy with a dredful herte,
And profreth him, right in his bare sherte,
To been right at your owne jugement,
Than oghte a god, by short avysement,
Considre his owne honour and his trespas.
For sith no cause of deeth lyth in this cas,
Yow oghte been the lighter merciable ;
Leteth your yre, and beth somwhat tretable !
The man hath served yow of his conning,
And forthred wel your lawe in his making.
Al be hit that he can nat wel endyte,
Yet hath he maked lewed folk delyte
To serve you, in preysing of your name.
He made the book that hight the Hous of Fame,
And eek the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the love of Palamon and Arcyte
Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte ;

And many an ympne for your halydayes,
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes;
And, for to speke of other holynesse,
He hath in prose translated Boëce,
And mad the Lyf also of seynt Cecyle:
He made also, goon sithen a greet whyl,
Origenes upon the Maudeleyne;
Him oghte now to have the lesse peyne;
He hath mad many a lay and many a thing.

'Now as ye been a god, and eek a king,
I, your Alceste, whylom quene of Trace,
I aske yow this man, right of your grace,
That ye him never hurte in al his lyve;
And he shal sweren yow, and that as blyve,
He shal no more agilten in this wyse;
But he shal maken, as ye wil devyse,
Of wemen trewe in lovinge al hir lyve,
Wher-so ye wil, of maiden or of wyve,
And forthren yow, as muche as he misseyde
Or in the Rose or elles in Creseyde.'

The god of love answerde hir thus anoon,
'Madame,' quod he, 'hit is so long agoon
That I yow knew so charitable and trewe,
That never yit, sith that the world was newe,
To me ne fond I better noon than ye.
If that I wolde save my degree,
I may ne wol nat werne your requeste;
Al lyth in yow, doth with him as yow leste.
I al forveve, with-outen lenger space;
For who-so yeveth a yift, or doth a grace,
Do hit by tyme, his thank is wel the more;
And demeth ye what he shal do therfore.
Go thanke now my lady heer,' quod he.

I roos, and doun I sette me on my knee,
And seyde thus: 'Madame, the god above
Foryelde yow, that ye the god of love
Han maked me his wrathe to foryive;
And yeve me grace so long for to live,
That I may knowe soothly what ye be,
That han me holpe, and put in this degree.

But trewely I wende, as in this cas,
Naught have agilt, ne doon to love trespas.
Forwhy a trewe man, with-outen drede,
Hath nat to parten with a theves dede;
Ne a trewe lover oghte me nat blame,
Thogh that I speke a fals lover som shame.
They oghte rather with me for to holde,
For that I of Creseyde wroot or tolde,
Or of the Rose; what-so myn auctour mente,
Algate, god wot, hit was myn entente
To forthren trouthe in love and hit cheryce;
And to be war fro falsnesse and fro vyce
By swich ensample; this was my meninge.'
And she answerde, 'lat be thyn arguinge;
For Love ne wol nat countrepleted be
In right ne wrong; and lerne that of me!
Thou hast thy grace, and hold thee right ther-to.
Now wol I seyn what penance thou shalt do
For thy trespas, and understond hit here:
Thou shalt, whyl that thou livest, yeer by yere,
The moste party of thy tyme spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Gode Wommen, maidenes and wyves,
That weren trewe in lovinge al hir lyves;
And telle of false men that hem bitrayen,
That al hir lyf ne doon nat but assayen
How many wommen they may doon a shame;
For in your world that is now holde a game.
And thogh thee lyke nat a lover be,
Spek wel of love; this penance yive I thee.
And to the god of love I shal so preye,
That he shal charge his servants, by any weye,
To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quyte;
Go now thy wey, this penance is but lyte.
And whan this book is maad, yive hit the quene
On my behalfe, at Eltham, or at Shene.'
The god of love gan smyle, and than he seyde,
'Wostow,' quod he, 'wher this be wyf or mayde,
Or quene, or countesse, or of what degree,
That hath so litel penance yiven thee,

That hast deserved sorer for to smerte?
But pitee renneth sone in gentil herte;
That maystow seen, she kytheth what she is.'
And I answerde, 'nay, sir, so have I blis,
No more but that I see wel she is good.'
'That is a trewe tale, by myn hood,'
Quod Love, 'and that thou knowest wel, pardee,
If hit be so that thou avyse thee.
Hastow nat in a book, lyth in thy cheste,
The grete goodnesse of the quene Alceste,
That turned was into a dayesye:
She that for hir husbonde chees to dye,
And eek to goon to helle, rather than he,
And Ercules rescowed hir, pardee,
And broghte hir out of helle agayn to blis?'
And I answerde ageyn, and seyde, 'yis,
Now knowe I hir! And is this good Alceste,
The dayesye, and myn owne hertes reste?
Now fele I wel the goodnesse of this wyf,
That bothe after hir deeth, and in hir lyf,
Hir grete bountee doubleth hir renoun!
Wel hath she quit me myn affeccioun
That I have to hir flour, the dayesye!
No wonder is thogh Jove hir stellifye,
As telleth Agaton, for hir goodnesse!
Hir whyte coroun berth of hit witnesse;
For also many vertues hadde she,
As smale floures in hir coroun be.
In remembraunce of hir and in honour,
Cibella made the dayesy and the flour
Y-coroned al with whyt, as men may see;
And Mars yaf to hir coroun reed, pardee,
In stede of rubies, set among the whyte.'
Therwith this quene wex reed for shame a lyte,
Whan she was preysed so in hir presence.
Than seyde Love, 'a ful gret negligence
Was hit to thee, that ilke tyme thou made
"Hyd, Absolon, thy tresses," in balade,
That thou forgete hir in thy song to sette.
Sin that thou art so gretly in hir dette,

And wost so wel, that kalender is she
To any woman that wol lover be:
For she taughte al the craft of fyn lovinge,
And namely of wyfhood the livinge,
And alle the boundes that she oghte kepe;
Thy litel wit was thilke tyme a-slepe.
But now I charge thee, upon thy lyf,
That in thy Legend thou make of this wyf,
Whan thou hast other smale y-maad before;
And fare now wel, I charge thee no more.
But er I go, thus muche I wol thee telle,
Ne shal no trewe lover come in helle.
Thise other ladies sittinge here arowe
Ben in thy balade, if thou canst hem knowe,
And in thy bokes alle thou shalt hem finde;
Have hem now in thy Legend alle in minde,
I mene of hem that been in thy knowinge.
For heer ben twenty thousand mo sittinge
Than thou knowest, that been good wommen alle
And trewe of love, for aught that may befalle;
Make the metres of hem as the leste.
I mot gon hoom, the sonne draweth weste,
To Paradys, with al this companye;
And serve alwey the fresshe dayesye.
At Cleopatre I wol that thou beginne;
And so forth; and my love so shalt thou winne.
For lat see now what man that lover be,
Wol doon so strong a peyne for love as she.
I wot wel that thou mayst nat al hit ryme,
That swiche lovers diden in hir tyme;
It were to long to reden and to here;
Suffyceth me, thou make in this manere,
That thou reherce of al hir lyf the grete,
After thise olde auctours listen to trete.
For who-so shal so many a storie telle,
Sey shortly, or he shal to longe dwelle.'
And with that word my bokes gan I take.
And right thus on my Legend gan I make.

Explicit prohemium.

I. THE LEGEND OF CLEOPATRA

Incipit Legenda Cleopatrie, Martiris, Egipti regine

After the deeth of Tholomee the king,
That al Egipte hadde in his governing,
Regned his quene Cleopataras;
Til on a tyme befel ther swiche a cas,
That out of Rome was sent a senatour,
For to conqueren regnes and honour
Unto the toun of Rome, as was usaunce,
To have the world unto her obeisaunce;
And, sooth to seye, Antonius was his name.
So fil hit, as Fortune him oghte a shame
Whan he was fallen in prosperitee,
Rebel unto the toun of Rome is he.
And over al this, the suster of Cesar,
He lafte hir falsly, er that she was war,
And wolde algates han another wyf;
For whiche he took with Rome and Cesar stryf.
Natheles, for-sooth, this ilke senatour
Was a ful worthy gentil werreyour,
And of his deeth hit was ful greet damage.
But love had broght this man in swiche a rage,
And him so narwe bounden in his las,
Al for the love of Cleopataras,
That al the world he sette at no value.
Him thoughte, nas to him no thing so due
As Cleopatras for to love and serve;
Him roghte nat in armes for to sterve
In the defence of hir, and of hir right.
This noble quene eek lovede so this knight,

Through his desert, and for his chivalrye;
As certeinly, but-if that bokes lye,
He was, of persone and of gentilesse,
And of discrecioun and hardinesse,
Worthy to any wight that liven may.
And she was fair as is the rose in May.
And, for to maken shortly is the beste,
She wex his wyf, and hadde him as hir leste.
The wedding and the feste to devyse,
To me, that have y-take swiche empryse
Of so many a storie for to make,
Hit were to long, lest that I sholde slake
Of thing that bereth more effect and charge;
For men may overlade a ship or barge;
And forthy to th'effect than wol I skippe,
And al the remenant, I wol lete hit slippe.
Octovian, that wood was of this dede,
Shoop him an ost on Antony to lede
Al-outerly for his destruccioun,
With stoute Romains, cruel as leoun;
To ship they wente, and thus I let hem saile.
Antonius was war, and wol nat faile
To meten with thise Romains, if he may;
Took eek his reed, and bothe, upon a day,
His wyf and he, and al his ost, forth wente
To shippe anoon, no lenger they ne stente;
And in the see hit happed hem to mete—
Up goth the trompe—and for to shoute and shete,
And peynen hem to sette on with the sonne.
With grisly soun out goth the grete gonne,
And heterly they hurtlen al at ones,
And fro the top doun cometh the grete stones.
In goth the grapenel so ful of crokes
Among the ropes, and the shering-hokes.
In with the polax presseth he and he;
Behind the mast beginneth he to flee,
And out agayn, and dryveth him overborde;
He stingeth him upon his speres orde;
He rent the sail with hokes lyke a sythe;
He bringeth the cuppe, and biddeth hem be blythe;

He poureth pesen upon the hacches slider ;
With pottes ful of lym they goon togider ;
And thus the longe day in fight they spende
Til, at the laste, as every thing hath ende,
Antony is shent, and put him to the flighte,
And al his folk to-go, that best go mighte.
Fleeth eek the queen, wit al her purpre sail,
For strokes, which that wente as thikke as hail ;
No wonder was, she mighte hit nat endure.
And whan that Antony saw that aventure,
'Allas!' quod he, 'the day that I was born!
My worshipe in this day thus have I lorn!'
And for dispeyr out of his witte he sterte,
And roof him-self anoon through-out the herte
Er that he ferther wente out of the place.
His wyf, that coude of Cesar have no grace,
To Egipte is fled, for drede and for distresse ;
But herkneth, ye that speke of kindenesse.
Ye men, that falsly sweren many an ooth
That ye wol dye, if that your love be wrooth,
Heer may ye seen of women whiche a trouthe!
This woful Cleopatre hath mad swich routhe
That ther nis tonge noon that may hit telle.
But on the morwe she wol no lenger dwelle,
But made hir subtil werkmen make a shryne
Of alle the rubies and the stones fyne
In al Egipte that she coude espye ;
And putte ful the shryne of spycerye,
And leet the cors embaume ; and forth she fette
This dede cors, and in the shryne hit shette.
And next the shryne a pit than doth she grave ;
And alle the serpents that she mighte have,
She putte hem in that grave, and thus she seyde :
'Now love, to whom my sorweful herte obeyde
So ferforthly that, fro that blisful houre
That I yow swor to been al frely youre,
I mene yow, Antonius my knight!
That never waking, in the day or night,
Ye nere out of myn hertes remembraunce
For wele or wo, for carole or for daunce ;

And in my-self this covenant made I tho,
That, right swich as ye felten, wele or wo,
As ferforth as hit in my power lay,
Unreprovable unto my wyfhood ay,
The same wolde I felen, lyf or deeth.
And thilke covenant, whyl me lasteth breeth,
I wol fulfille, and that shal wel be sene;
Was never unto hir love a trewer quene.'
And with that word, naked, with ful good herte,
Among the serpents in the pit she sterte,
And ther she chees to han hir buryinge.
Anoon the neddres gonne hir for to stinge,
And she hir deeth receyveth, with good chere,
For love of Antony, that was hir so dere:—
And this is storial sooth, hit is no fable.
Now, er I finde a man thus trewe and stable,
And wol for love his deeth so freely take,
I pray god lat our hedes never ake!

Explicit Legenda Cleopatrie, Martiris

II. THE LEGEND OF THISBE OF BABYLON

Incipit Legenda Tesbe Babilonie, Martiris

At Babiloine whylom fil it thus,
The whiche toun the queen Semiramus
Leet dichen al about, and walles make
Ful hye, of harde tyles wel y-bake.
Ther weren dwellinge in this noble toun
Two lordes, which that were of greet renoun,
And woneden so nigh, upon a grene,
That ther nas but a stoon-wal hem bitwene,
As ofte in grete tounes is the wone.
And sooth to seyn, that o man hadde a sone,
Of al that londe oon of the lustieste.
That other hadde a doghter, the faireste,
That estward in the world was tho dwellinge.
The name of everich gan to other springe
By wommen, that were neighebores aboute.
For in that contree yit, withouten doute,
Maidens been y-kept, for jelosye,
Ful streite, lest they diden som folye.
This yonge man was cleped Piramus,
And Tisbe hight the maid, Naso seith thus;
And thus by report was hir name y-shove
That, as they wexe in age, wex hir love;
And certein, as by reson of hir age,
Ther mighte have been bitwix hem mariage,
But that hir fadres nolde hit nat assente;
And bothe in love y-lyke sore they brente,
That noon of alle hir frendes mighte hit lette

But prively somtyme yit they mette
By sleighte, and speken som of hir desyr;
As, wry the gleed, and hotter is the fyr;
Forbede a love, and it is ten so wood.
This wal, which that bitwix hem bothe stood,
Was cloven a-two, right fro the toppe adoun,
Of olde tyme of his fundacioun;
But yit this clifte was so narwe and lyte,
It nas nat sene, dere y-nogh a myte.
But what is that, that love can nat espye?
Ye lovers two, if that I shal nat lye,
Ye founden first this litel narwe clifte;
And, with a soun as softe as any shrifte,
They lete hir wordes through the clifte pace,
And tolden, whyl that they stode in the place,
Al hir compleynt of love, and al hir wo,
At every tyme whan they dorste so.
Upon that o syde of the wal stood he,
And on that other syde stood Tisbe,
The swote soun of other to receyve,
And thus hir wardeins wolde they deceyve.
And every day this wal they wolde threte,
And wisshe to god, that it were doun y-bete.
Thus wolde they seyn—'allas! thou wikked wal,
Through thyn envye thou us lettest al!
Why nilt thou cleve, or fallen al a-two?
Or, at the leste, but thou woldest so,
Yit woldestow but ones lete us mete,
Or ones that we mighte kissen swete,
Than were we covered of our cares colde.
But natheles, yit be we to thee holde
In as muche as thou suffrest for to goon
Our wordes through thy lyme and eek thy stoon.
Yit oghte we with thee ben wel apayd.'
And whan thise ydel wordes weren sayd,
The colde wal they wolden kisse of stoon,
And take hir leve, and forth they wolden goon.
And this was gladly in the even-tyde
Or wonder erly, lest men hit espyde;
And longe tyme they wroghte in this manere

Til on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere,
Aurora with the stremes of hir hete
Had dryed up the dew of herbes wete;
Unto this clifte, as it was wont to be,
Com Pyramus, and after com Tisbe,
And plighten trouthe fully in hir fey
That ilke same night to stele awey,
And to begyle hir wardeins everichoon,
And forth out of the citee for to goon;
And, for the feldes been so brode and wyde,
For to mete in o place at o tyde,
They sette mark hir meting sholde be
Ther king Ninus was graven, under a tree;
For olde payens that ydoles heried
Useden tho in feldes to ben beried;
And faste by this grave was a welle.
And, shortly of this tale for to telle,
This covenant was affermed wonder faste;
And longe hem thoughte that the sonne laste,
That hit nere goon under the see adoun.
This Tisbe hath so greet affeccioun
And so greet lyking Piramus to see,
That, whan she seigh her tyme mighte be,
At night she stal awey ful prively
With her face y-wimpled subtilly;
For alle her frendes —for to save her trouthe—
She hath for-sake; allas! and that is routhe
That ever woman wolde be so trewe
To trusten man, but she the bet him knewe!
And to the tree she goth a ful good pas,
For love made her so hardy in this cas;
And by the welle adoun she gan her dresse.
Allas! than comth a wilde leonesse
Out of the wode, withouten more areste,
With blody mouthe, of strangling of a beste,
To drinken of the welle, ther as she sat;
And, whan that Tisbe had espyed that,
She rist her up, with a ful drery herte,
And in a cave with dredful foot she sterte,
For by the mone she seigh hit wel withalle.

And, as she ran, her wimpel leet she falle,
And took noon heed, so sore she was a-whaped,
And eek so glad of that she was escaped ;
And thus she sit, and darketh wonder stille.
Whan that this leonesse hath dronke her fille,
Aboute the welle gan she for to winde,
And right anoon the wimpel gan she finde,
And with her blody mouth hit al to-rente.
Whan this was doon, no lenger she ne stente,
But to the wode her wey than hath she nome.
And, at the laste, this Piramus is come,
But al to longe, allas ! at hoom was he.
The mone shoon, men mighte wel y-see,
And in his weye, as that he com ful faste,
His eyen to the grounde adoun he caste,
And in the sonde, as he beheld adoun,
He seigh the steppes brode of a leoun,
And in his herte he sodeinly agroos,
And pale he wex, therwith his heer aroos,
And neer he com, and fond the wimpel torn.
'Allas !' quod he, 'the day that I was born !
This o night wol us lovers bothe slee !
How sholde I axen mercy of Tisbe
Whan I am he that have yow slain, allas !
My bidding hath yow slain, as in this cas.
Allas ! to bidde a woman goon by nighte
In place ther as peril fallen mighte,
And I so slow ! allas, I ne hadde be
Here in this place a furlong-wey or ye !
Now what leoun that be in this foreste,
My body mote he renden, or what beste
That wilde is, gnawen mote he now myn herte !'
And with that worde he to the wimpel sterte,
And kiste hit ofte, and weep on hit ful sore,
And seide, 'wimpel, allas ! ther nis no more
But thou shalt fele as wel the blood of me
As thou hast felt the bleding of Tisbe !'
And with that worde he smoot him to the herte.
The blood out of the wounde as brode sterte
As water, whan the conduit broken is.

Now Tisbe, which that wiste nat of this,
But sitting in her drede, she thoghte thus,
'If hit so falle that my Piramus
Be comen hider, and may me nat y-finde,
He may me holden fals and eek unkinde.'
And out she comth, and after him gan espyen
Bothe with her herte and with her yën,
And thoghte, 'I wol him tellen of my drede
Bothe of the leonesse and al my dede.'
And at the laste her love than hath she founde
Beting with his heles on the grounde,
Al blody, and therwith-al a-bak she sterte,
And lyke the wawes quappe gan her herte,
And pale as box she wex, and in a throwe
Avysed her, and gan him wel to knowe,
That hit was Piramus, her herte dere.
Who coude wryte whiche a deedly chere
Hath Tisbe now, and how her heer she rente,
And how she gan her-selve to turmente,
And how she lyth and swowneth on the grounde,
And how she weep of teres ful his wounde,
How medeleth she his blood with her compleynte,
And with his blood her-selven gan she peynte;
How clippeth she the dede cors, allas!
How doth this woful Tisbe in this cas!
How kisseth she his frosty mouth so cold!
'Who hath doon this, and who hath been so bold
To sleen my leef? O spek, my Piramus!
I am thy Tisbe, that thee calleth thus!'
And therwith-al she lifteth up his heed.

This woful man, that was nat fully deed,
Whan that he herde the name of Tisbe cryen,
On her he caste his hevy deedly yën
And doun again, and yeldeth up the gost.

Tisbe rist up, withouten noise or bost,
And seigh her wimpel and his empty shethe,
And eek his swerd, that him hath doon to dethe;
Than spak she thus: 'My woful hand,' quod she,
'Is strong y-nogh in swiche a werk to me;
For love shal yive me strengthe and hardinesse

To make my wounde large y-nogh, I gesse.
I wol thee folwen deed, and I wol be
Felawe and cause eek of thy deeth,' quod she.
'And thogh that nothing save the deeth only
Mighte thee fro me departe trewely,
Thou shalt no more departe now fro me
Than fro the deeth, for I wol go with thee!
'And now, ye wrecched jelous fadres oure,
We, that weren whylom children youre,
We prayen yow, withouten more envye,
That in o grave y-fere we moten lye,
Sin love hath brought us to this pitous ende!
And rightwis god to every lover sende,
That loveth trewely, more prosperitee
Than ever hadde Piramus and Tisbe!
And lat no gentil woman her assure
To putten her in swiche an aventure.
But god forbede but a woman can
Been as trewe and loving as a man!
And, for my part, I shal anoon it kythe!'
And, with that worde, his swerd she took as swythe
That warm was of her loves blood and hoot,
And to the herte she her-selven smoot.
And thus ar Tisbe and Piramus ago.
Of trewe men I finde but fewe mo
In alle my bokes, save this Piramus,
And therfor have I spoken of him thus.
For hit is deyntee to us men to finde
A man that can in love be trewe and kinde
Heer may ye seen, what lover so he be,
A woman dar and can as wel as he.

Explicit Legenda Tesbe.

III. THE LEGEND OF DIDO, QUEEN OF CARTHAGE

Incipit Legenda Didonis Martiris, Cartaginis regine

Glory and honour, Virgil Mantuan,
Be to thy name! and I shal, as I can,
Folow thy lantern, as thou gost biforn,
How Eneas to Dido was forsworn.
In thyn Eneïd and Naso wol I take
The tenour, and the grete effectes make.
Whan Troye broght was to destruccioun
By Grekes sleighte, and namely by Sinoun,
Feyning the hors y-offred to Minerve,
Through which that many a Troyan moste sterve;
And Ector had, after his deeth, appered,
And fyr so wood, it mighte nat be stered,
In al the noble tour of Ilioun,
That of the citee was the cheef dungeoun;
And al the contree was so lowe y-broght,
And Priamus the king fordoon and noght;
And Eneas was charged by Venus
To fleen awey, he took Ascanius,
That was his sone, in his right hand, and fledde;
And on his bakke he bar and with him ledde
His olde fader, cleped Anchises,
And by the weye his wyf Creusa he lees.
And mochel sorwe hadde he in his minde
Er that he coude his felawshippe finde.
But, at the laste, whan he had hem founde,
He made him redy in a certein stounde,

And to the see ful faste he gan him hye,
And saileth forth with al his companye
Toward Itaile, as wolde destinee.
But of his aventures in the see
Nis nat to purpos for to speke of here,
For hit acordeth nat to my matere.
But, as I seide, of him and of Dido
Shal be my tale, til that I have do.
So longe he sailed in the salte see
Til in Libye unnethe aryved he,
With shippes seven and with no more navye;
And glad was he to londe for to hye,
So was he with the tempest al to-shake.
And whan that he the haven had y-take,
He had a knight, was called Achates;
And him of al his felawshippe he chees
To goon with him, the contre for tespye;
He took with him no more companye.
But forth they goon, and lafte his shippes ryde
His fere and he, with-outen any gyde.
So longe he walketh in this wildernesse
Til, at the laste, he mette an hunteresse.
A bowe in honde and arwes hadde she,
Her clothes cutted were unto the knee;
But she was yit the fairest creature
That ever was y-formed by nature;
And Eneas and Achates she grette,
And thus she to hem spak, whan she hem mette.
'Sawe ye,' quod she, 'as ye han walked wyde,
Any of my sustren walke yow besyde,
With any wilde boor or other beste
That they han hunted to, in this foreste,
Y-tukked up, with arwes in her cas?'
'Nay, soothly, lady,' quod this Eneas;
'But, by thy beaute, as hit thinketh me,
Thou mightest never erthely womman be,
But Phebus suster artow, as I gesse.
And, if so be that thou be a goddesse,
Have mercy on our labour and our wo.'
'I nam no goddes, soothly,' quod she tho;

'For maidens walken in this contree here,
With arwes and with bowe, in this manere.
This is the regne of Libie, ther ye been,
Of which that Dido lady is and queen'—
And shortly tolde him al the occasioun
Why Dido com into that regioun,
Of which as now me lusteth nat to ryme;
Hit nedeth nat; hit nere but los of tyme.
For this is al and som, it was Venus,
His owne moder, that spak with him thus;
And to Cartage she bad he sholde him dighte,
And vanished anoon out of his sighte.
I coude folwe, word for word, Virgyle,
But it wolde lasten al to longe a whyle
This noble queen, that cleped was Dido,
That whylom was the wyf of Sitheo,
That fairer was then is the brighte sonne,
This noble toun of Cartage hath begonne;
In which she regneth in so greet honour,
That she was holde of alle quenes flour,
Of gentilesse, of freedom, of beautee;
That wel was him that mighte her ones see;
Of kinges and of lordes so desyred,
That al the world her beaute hadde y-fyred;
She stood so wel in every wightes grace.
Whan Eneas was come un-to that place,
Unto the maister-temple of al the toun
Ther Dido was in her devocioun,
Ful prively his wey than hath he nome.
Whan he was in the large temple come,
I can nat seyn if that hit be possible,
But Venus hadde him maked invisible—
Thus seith the book, with-outen any lees.
And whan this Eneas and Achates
Hadden in this temple been over-al,
Than founde they, depeynted on a wal,
How Troye and al the lond destroyed was.
'Allas! that I was born,' quod Eneas,
'Through-out the world our shame is kid so wyde,
Now it is peynted upon every syde!

We, that weren in prosperitee,
Be now disslaundred, and in swich degree,
No lenger for to liven I ne kepe !'
And, with that worde, he brast out for to wepe
So tendrely, that routhe hit was to sene.
This fresshe lady, of the citee quene,
Stood in the temple, in her estat royal,
So richely, and eek so fair with-al,
So yong, so lusty, with her eyen glade,
That, if that god, that heven and erthe made,
Wolde han a love, for beaute and goodnesse,
And womanhod, and trouthe, and seemlinesse,
Whom sholde he loven but this lady swete ?
There nis no womman to him half so mete.
Fortune, that hath the world in governaunce,
Hath sodeinly broght in so newe a chaunce,
That never was ther yit so fremd a cas.
For al the companye of Eneas,
Which that he wende han loren in the see,
Aryved is, nat fer fro that citee ;
For which, the grettest of his lordes some
By aventure ben to the citee come,
Unto that same temple, for to seke
The quene, and of her socour her beseke ;
Swich renoun was ther spronge of her goodnesse.
And, whan they hadden told al hir distresse,
And al hir tempest and hir harde cas,
Unto the quene appered Eneas,
And openly beknew that hit was he.
Who hadde joye than but his meynee,
That hadden founde hir lord, hir governour ?
The quene saw they dide him swich honour,
And had herd ofte of Eneas, er tho,
And in her herte she hadde routhe and wo
That ever swich a noble man as he
Shal been disherited in swich degree ;
And saw the man, that he was lyk a knight,
And suffisaunt of persone and of might,
And lyk to been a veray gentil man ;
And wel his wordes he besette can,

And had a noble visage for the nones,
And formed wel of braunes and of bones.
For, after Venus, hadde he swiche fairnesse,
That no man might be half so fair, I gesse.
And wel a lord he semed for to be.
And, for he was a straunger, somwhat she
Lyked him the bet, as, god do bote,
To some folk ofte newe thing is swote.
Anoon her herte hath pitee of his wo,
And, with that pitee, love com in also;
And thus, for pitee and for gentilesse,
Refresshed moste he been of his distresse.
She seide, certes, that she sory was
That he hath had swich peril and swich cas;
And, in her frendly speche, in this manere
She to him spak, and seide as ye may here.
'Be ye nat Venus sone and Anchises?
In good feith, al the worship and encrees
That I may goodly doon yow, ye shul have.
Your shippes and your meynee shal I save;'
And many a gentil word she spak him to;
And comaunded her messageres go
The same day, with-outen any faile,
His shippes for to seke, and hem vitaile.
She many a beste to the shippes sente,
And with the wyn she gan hem to presente;
And to her royal paleys she her spedde,
And Eneas alwey with her she ledde.
What nedeth yow the feste to descryve?
He never beter at ese was his lyve.
Ful was the feste of deyntees and richesse,
Of instruments, of song, and of gladnesse,
And many an amorous loking and devys.
This Eneas is come to Paradys
Out of the swolow of helle, and thus in joye
Remembreth him of his estat in Troye.
To dauncing-chambres ful of paremente,
Of riche beddes, and of ornaments,
This Eneas is lad, after the mete.
And with the quene whan that he had sete,

And spyces parted, and the wyn agoon,
Unto his chambres was he lad anoon
To take his ese and for to have his reste,
With al his folk, to doon what so hem leste
  Ther nas coursere wel y-brydled noon,
Ne stede, for the justing wel to goon,
Ne large palfrey, esy for the nones,
Ne juwel, fretted ful of riche stones,
Ne sakkes ful of gold, of large wighte,
Ne ruby noon, that shynede by nighte,
Ne gentil hautein faucon heronere,
Ne hound, for hert or wilde boor or dere,
Ne coupe of gold, with florins newe y-bete,
That in the lond of Libie may be gete,
That Dido ne hath hit Eneas y-sent;
And al is payed, what that he hath spent.
Thus can this noble quene her gestes calle,
As she that can in freedom passen alle.
  Eneas sothly eek, with-outen lees,
Hath sent un-to his shippe, by Achates,
After his sone, and after riche thinges,
Both ceptre, clothes, broches, and eek ringes,
Som for to were, and som for to presente
To her, that all thise noble thinges him sente;
And bad his sone, how that he sholde make
The presenting, and to the quene hit take.
  Repaired is this Achates again,
And Eneas ful blisful is and fain
To seen his yonge sone Ascanius.
But natheles, our autour telleth us,
That Cupido, that is the god of love,
At preyere of his moder, hye above,
Hadde the lyknes of the child y-take,
This noble quene enamoured to make
On Eneas; but, as of that scripture,
Be as be may, I make of hit no cure.
But sooth is this, the quene hath mad swich chere
Un-to this child, that wonder is to here;
And of the present that his fader sente
She thanked him ful ofte, in good entente.

Thus is this quene in plesaunce and in joye,
With al this newe lusty folk of Troye.
And of the dedes hath she more enquered
Of Eneas, and al the story lered
Of Troye; and al the longe day they tweye
Entendeden to speken and to pleye;
Of which ther gan to breden swich a fyr,
That sely Dido hath now swich desyr
With Eneas, her newe gest, to dele,
That she hath lost her hewe, and eek her hele.
Now to th'effect, now to the fruit of al,
Why I have told this story, and tellen shal.
Thus I beginne; hit fil, upon a night,
When that the mone up-reysed had her light,
This noble quene un-to her reste wente;
She syketh sore, and gan her-self turmente.
She waketh, walweth, maketh many a brayd,
As doon thise loveres, as I have herd sayd.
And at the laste, unto her suster Anne
She made her moon, and right thus spak she thanne.
'Now, dere suster myn, what may hit be
That me agasteth in my dreme?' quod she.
'This ilke Troyan is so in my thoght,
For that me thinketh he is so wel y-wroght,
And eek so lykly for to be a man,
And therwithal so mikel good he can,
That al my love and lyf lyth in his cure.
Have ye not herd him telle his aventure?
Now certes, Anne, if that ye rede hit me,
I wolde fain to him y-wedded be;
This is th'effect; what sholde I more seye?
In him lyth al, to do me live or deye.'
Her suster Anne, as she that coude her good,
Seide as her thoughte, and somdel hit with-stood.
But her-of was so long a sermoning,
Hit were to long to make rehersing;
But fynally, hit may not been with-stonde;
Love wol love—for no wight wol hit wonde.
The dawening up-rist out of the see;
This amorous quene chargeth her meynee

The nettes dresse, and speres brode and kene ;
An hunting wol this lusty fresshe quene :
So priketh her this newe joly wo.
To hors is al her lusty folk y-go ;
Un-to the court the houndes been y-broght,
And up-on coursers, swift as any thoght,
Her yonge knightes hoven al aboute,
And of her wommen eek an huge route.
Up-on a thikke palfrey, paper-whyt,
With sadel rede, enbrouded with delyt,
Of gold the barres up-enbossed hye,
Sit Dido, al in gold and perre wrye ;
And she is fair, as is the brighte morwe,
That heleth seke folk of nightes sorwe.
Up-on a courser, startling as the fyr,
Men mighte turne him with a litel wyr,
Sit Eneas, lyk Phebus to devyse ;
So was he fresshe arayed in his wyse.
The fomy brydel with the bit of gold
Governeth he, right as him-self hath wold.
And forth this noble quene thus lat I ryde
An hunting, with this Troyan by her syde.
The herd of hertes founden is anoon,
With 'hey ! go bet ! prik thou ! lat goon, lat goon!
Why nil the leoun comen or the bere,
That I mighte ones mete him with this spere?'
Thus seyn thise yonge folk, and up they kille
These hertes wilde, and han hem at hir wille.
Among al this to-romblen gan the heven,
The thunder rored with a grisly steven ;
Doun com the rain, with hail and sleet so faste,
With hevenes fyr, that hit so sore agaste
This noble quene, and also her meynee,
That ech of hem was glad a-wey to flee.
And shortly, fro the tempest her to save,
She fledde her-self into a litel cave,
And with her wente this Eneas al-so ;
I noot, with hem if ther wente any mo ;
The autour maketh of hit no mencioun.
And heer began the depe affeccioun

Betwix hem two ; this was the firste morwe
Of her gladnesse, and ginning of her sorwe.
For ther hath Eneas y-kneled so,
And told her al his herte, and al his wo,
And sworn so depe, to her to be trewe,
For wele or wo, and chaunge for no newe,
And as a fals lover so wel can pleyne,
That sely Dido rewed on his peyne,
And took him for husband, to been his wyf
For ever-mo, whyl that hem laste lyf.
And after this, whan that the tempest stente,
With mirth out as they comen, hoom they wente.
The wikked fame up roos, and that anon,
How Eneas hath with the quene y-gon
In-to the cave ; and demed as hem liste ;
And whan the king, that Yarbas hight, hit wiste,
As he that had her loved ever his lyf,
And wowed her, to have her to his wyf,
Swich sorwe as he hath maked, and swich chere,
Hit is a routhe and pitee for to here.
But, as in love, al-day hit happeth so,
That oon shal laughen at anothers wo ;
Now laugheth Eneas, and is in joye
And more richesse than ever he was in Troye.
O sely womman, ful of innocence,
Ful of pitee, of trouthe, and conscience,
What maked yow to men to trusten so ?
Have ye swich routhe upon hir feined wo,
And han swich olde ensamples yow beforn ?
See ye nat alle, how they been for-sworn ?
Wher see ye oon, that he ne hath laft his leef,
Or been unkinde, or doon hir som mischeef,
Or pilled her, or bosted of his dede ?
Ye may as wel hit seen, as ye may rede ;
Tak heed now of this grete gentil-man,
This Troyan, that so wel her plesen can,
That feineth him so trewe and obeising,
So gentil and so privy of his doing,
And can so wel doon alle his obeisaunces,
And waiten her at festes and at daunces,

And when she goth to temple and hoom ageyn,
And fasten til he hath his lady seyn,
And bere in his devyses, for her sake,
Noot I nat what; and songes wolde he make,
Justen, and doon of armes many thinges,
Sende her lettres, tokens, broches, ringes—
Now herkneth, how he shal his lady serve!
Ther-as he was in peril for to sterve
For hunger, and for mischeef in the see,
And desolat, and fled from his coutree,
And al his folk with tempest al to-driven,
She hath her body and eek her reame yiven
In-to his hond, ther-as she mighte have been
Of other lond than of Cartage a queen,
And lived in joye y-nogh; what wolde ye more?
This Eneas, that hath so depe y-swore,
Is wery of his craft with-in a throwe;
The hote ernest is al over-blowe.
And prively he doth his shippes dighte,
And shapeth him to stele a-wey by nighte.
This Dido hath suspecioun of this,
And thoughte wel, that hit was al a-mis;
For in his bedde he lyth a-night and syketh;
She asketh him anoon, what him mislyketh—
'My dere herte, which that I love most?'
'Certes,' quod he, 'this night my fadres gost
Hath in my sleep so sore me tormented,
And eek Mercurie his message hath presented,
That nedes to the conquest of Itaile
My destinee is sone for to saile;
For which, me thinketh, brosten is myn herte!'
Ther-with his false teres out they sterte;
And taketh her with-in in his armes two.
'Is that in ernest,' quod she; 'wil ye so?
Have ye nat sworn to wyve me to take,
Alas! what womman wil ye of me make?
I am a gentil-woman and a queen,
Ye wil nat fro your wyf thus foule fleen?
That I was born! allas! what shal I do?'
To telle in short, this noble queen Dido,

She seketh halwes, and doth sacrifyse ;
She kneleth, cryeth, that routhe is to devyse ;
Conjureth him, and profreth him to be
His thral, his servant in the leste gree ;
She falleth him to fote, and swowneth there
Dischevele, with her brighte gilte here,
And seith, ' have mercy ! let me with yow ryde !
Thise lordes, which that wonen me besyde
Wil me destroyen only for your sake.
And, so ye wil me now to wyve take,
As ye han sworn, than wol I yive yow leve
To sleen me with your swerd now sone at eve !
For than yit shal I dyen as your wyf.
I am with childe, and yive my child his lyf.
Mercy, lord ! have pite in your thoght !'
But al this thing availeth her right noght ;
For on a night, slepinge, he let her lye,
And stal a-wey un-to his companye,
And, as a traitour, forth he gan to saile
Toward the large contree of Itaile.
Thus hath he laft Dido in wo and pyne ;
And wedded ther a lady hight Lavyne.

A cloth he lafte, and eek his swerd stonding,
Whan he fro Dido stal in her sleping,
Right at her beddes heed, so gan he hye
Whan that he stal a-wey to his navye ;
Which cloth, whan sely Dido gan awake,
She hath hit kist ful ofte for his sake ;
And seide, ' O cloth, whyl Jupiter hit leste,
Tak now my soule, unbind me of this unreste !
I have fulfild of fortune al the cours.'
And thus, allas ! with-outen his socours,
Twenty tyme y-swowned hath she thanne.
And, whan that she un-to her suster Anne
Compleyned had, of which I may nat wryte—
So greet a routhe I have hit for t'endyte—
And bad her norice and her suster goon
To fecchen fyr and other thing anoon,
And seide, that she wolde sacrifye.
And, whan she mighte her tyme wel espye,

Up-on the fyr of sacrifys she sterte,
And with his swerd she roof her to the herte.
But, as myn autour seith, right thus she seyde;
Or she was hurt, before that she deyde,
She wroot a lettre anoon, that thus began:—
'Right so,' quod she, 'as that the whyte swan
Ayeins his deeth beginneth for to singe,
Right so to yow make I my compleyninge.
Nat that I trowe to geten yow again,
For wel I woot that it is al in vain,
Sin that the goddes been contraire to me.
But sin my name is lost through yow,' quod she,
'I may wel lese a word on yow, or letter,
Al-be-it that I shal be never the better;
For thilke wind that blew your ship a-wey,
The same wind hath blowe a-wey your fey.'—
But who wol al this letter have in minde,
Rede Ovide, and in him he shal hit finde.

Explicit Legenda Didonis Martiris, Cartaginis regine

IV. THE LEGEND OF HYPSIPYLE AND MEDEA

Incipit Legenda Ysiphile et Medee, Martirum

Part I. The Legend of Hypsipyle

Thou rote of false lovers, duk Jasoun !
Thou sly devourer and confusioun
Of gentil-wommen, tender creatures,
Thou madest thy reclaiming and thy lures
To ladies of thy statly apparaunce,
And of thy wordes, farced with plesaunce,
And of thy feyned trouthe and thy manere,
With thyn obeisaunce and thy humble chere,
And with thy counterfeted peyne and wo.
Ther other falsen oon, thou falsest two !
O ! ofte swore thou that thou woldest dye
For love, whan thou ne feltest maladye
Save foul delyt, which that thou callest love !
If that I live, thy name shal be shove
In English, that thy sleighte shal be knowe !
Have at thee, Jasoun ! now thyn horn is blowe !
But certes, hit is bothe routhe and wo
That love with false loveres werketh so ;
For they shul have wel better love and chere
Than he that hath aboght his love ful dere,
Or had in armes many a blody box.
For ever as tendre a capoun et the fox,
Thogh he be fals and hath the foul betrayed,
As shal the good-man that ther-for hath payed ;

Al have he to the capoun skille and right
The false fox wol have his part at night.
On Jasoun this ensample is wel y-sene
By Isiphile and Medea the quene.
In Tessalye, as Guido telleth us,
Ther was a king that highte Pelleus,
That had a brother, which that highte Eson;
And, whan for age he mighte unnethes gon,
He yaf to Pelleus the governing
Of al his regne, and made him lord and king.
Of which Eson this Jasoun geten was,
That, in his tyme, in al that lond, ther nas
Nat swich a famous knight of gentilesse,
Of freedom, and of strengthe and lustinesse.
After his fader deeth, he bar him so
That ther nas noon that liste been his fo,
But dide him al honour and companye;
Of which this Pelleus hath greet envye,
Imagining that Jasoun mighte be
Enhaunsed so, and put in swich degree
With love of lordes of his regioun,
That from his regne he may be put adoun.
And in his wit, a-night, compassed he
How Jasoun mighte best destroyed be
Withoute slaunder of his compasment.
And at the laste he took avisement
To senden him in-to som fer contree
Ther as this Jasoun may destroyed be.
This was his wit; al made he to Jasoun
Gret chere of love and of affeccioun,
For drede lest his lordes hit espyde.
So fil hit so, as fame renneth wyde,
Ther was swich tyding over-al and swich los,
That in an yle that called was Colcos,
Beyonde Troye, estward in the see,
That ther-in was a ram, that men mighte see,
That had a flees of gold, that shoon so brighte,
That no-wher was ther swich an-other sighte;
But hit was kept alway with a dragoun,
And many othere merveils, up and doun,

And with two boles, maked al of bras,
That spitten fyr, and moche thing ther was.
But this was eek the tale, nathelees,
That who-so wolde winne thilke flees,
He moste bothe, or he hit winne mighte,
With the boles and the dragoun fighte;
And king Oëtes lord was of that yle.
This Pelleus bethoghte upon this wyle;
That he his nevew Jasoun wolde enhorte
To sailen to that lond, him to disporte,
And seide, 'Nevew, if hit mighte be
That swich a worship mighte fallen thee,
That thou this famous tresor mightest winne,
And bringen hit my regioun with-inne,
Hit were to me gret plesaunce and honour;
Than were I holde to quyte thy labour.
And al the cost I wol my-selven make;
And chees what folk that thou wilt with thee take;
Lat see now, darstow taken this viage?'
Jasoun was yong, and lusty of corage,
And under-took to doon this ilke empryse.
Anoon Argus his shippes gan devyse;
With Jasoun wente the stronge Ercules,
And many an-other that he with him chees.
But who-so axeth who is with him gon,
Lat him go reden Argonauticon,
For he wol telle a tale long y-now.
Philotetes anoon the sail up-drow,
Whan that the wind was good, and gan him hye
Out of his contree called Tessalye.
So long he sailed in the salte see
Til in the yle Lemnoun aryved he—
Al be this nat rehersed of Guido,
Yet seith Ovyde in his Epistles so—
And of this yle lady was and quene
The faire yonge Isiphilee, the shene,
That whylom Thoas doghter was, the king.
Isiphilee was goon in her playing;
And, roming on the clyves by the see,
Under a banke anoon espyed she

Wher that the ship of Jasoun gan aryve.
Of her goodnesse adoun she sendeth blyve
To witen yif that any straunge wight
With tempest thider were y-blowe a-night,
To doon him socour; as was her usaunce
To forthren every wight, and doon plesaunce
Of veray bountee and of curtesye.
This messagere adoun him gan to hye,
And fond Jasoun, and Ercules also,
That in a cogge to londe were y-go
Hem to refresshen and to take the eyr.
The morwening atempre was and fair;
And in his wey the messagere hem mette.
Ful cunningly thise lordes two he grette,
And dide his message, axing hem anoon
Yif they were broken, or oght wo begoon,
Or hadde nede of lodesmen or vitaile;
For of socour they shulde no-thing faile,
For hit was utterly the quenes wille.
Jasoun answerde, mekely and stille,
'My lady,' quod he, 'thanke I hertely
Of hir goodnesse; us nedeth, trewely,
No-thing as now, but that we wery be,
And come for to pleye, out of the see,
Til that the wind be better in our weye.'
This lady rometh by the clif to pleye,
With her meynee, endelong the stronde,
And fynt this Jasoun and this other stonde,
In spekinge of this thing, as I yow tolde.
This Ercules and Jasoun gan beholde
How that the quene hit was, and faire her grette
Anon-right as they with this lady mette;
And she took heed, and knew, by hir manere,
By hir aray, by wordes and by chere,
That hit were gentil-men, of greet degree.
And to the castel with her ledeth she
Thise straunge folk, and doth hem greet honour,
And axeth hem of travail and labour
That they han suffred in the salte see;
So that, within a day, or two, or three,

She knew, by folk that in his shippes be,
That hit was Jasoun, ful of renomee,
And Ercules, that had the grete los,
That soghten the aventures of Colcos;
And dide hem honour more then before,
And with hem deled ever lenger the more,
For they ben worthy folk, with-outen lees.
And namely, most she spak with Ercules;
To him her herte bar, he sholde be
Sad, wys, and trewe, of wordes avisee,
With-outen any other affeccioun
Of love, or evil imaginacioun.
This Ercules hath so this Jasoun preysed,
That to the sonne he hath him up areysed,
That half so trewe a man ther nas of love
Under the cope of heven that is above;
And he was wys, hardy, secree, and riche.—
Of thise three pointes ther nas noon him liche;
Of freedom passed he, and lustihede,
Alle tho that liven or ben dede;
Ther-to so greet a gentil-man was he,
And of Tessalie lykly king to be.
Ther nas no lak, but that he was agast
To love, and for to speke shamefast.
He hadde lever him-self to mordre, and dye
Than that men shulde a lover him espye:—
'As wolde almighty god that I had yive
My blood and flesh, so that I mighte live,
With the nones that he hadde o-wher a wyf
For his estat; for swich a lusty lyf
She sholde lede with this lusty knight!'
And al this was compassed on the night
Betwixe him Jasoun and this Ercules.
Of thise two heer was mad a shrewed lees
To come to hous upon an innocent;
For to be-dote this queen was hir assent.
And Jasoun is as coy as is a maide,
He loketh pitously, but noght he saide,
But frely yaf he to her conseileres
Yiftes grete, and to her officeres.

As wolde god I leiser hadde, and tyme,
By proces al his wowing for to ryme.
But in this hous if any fals lover be,
Right as him-self now doth, right so dide he,
With feyning and with every sotil dede.
Ye gete no more of me, but ye wil rede
Th'original, that telleth al the cas.
The somme is this, that Jasoun wedded was
Unto this quene, and took of her substaunce
What-so him liste, unto his purveyaunce;
And upon her begat he children two,
And drow his sail, and saw her never-mo.
A lettre sente she to him certein,
Which were to long to wryten and to sein,
And him repreveth of his grete untrouthe,
And preyeth him on her to have som routhe.
And of his children two, she seide him this,
That they be lyke, of alle thing, y-wis,
To Jasoun, save they coude nat begyle;
And preyed god, or hit were longe whyle,
That she, that had his herte y-raft her fro,
Moste finden him to her untrewe al-so,
And that she moste bothe her children spille,
And alle tho that suffreth him his wille.
And trew to Jasoun was she al her lyf,
And ever kepte her chast, as for his wyf;
Ne never had she joye at her herte,
But dyed, for his love, of sorwes smerte.

Part II. The Legend of Medea

To Colcos comen is this duk Jasoun,
That is of love devourer and dragoun.
As matere appetyteth forme al-wey,
And from forme in-to forme hit passen may,
Or as a welle that were botomlees,
Right so can fals Jasoun have no pees.
For, to desyren, through his appetyt,
To doon with gentil wommen his delyt,
This is his lust and his felicitee.

Jasoun is romed forth to the citee,
That whylom cleped was Jaconitos,
That was the maister-toun of al Colcos,
And hath y-told the cause of his coming
Un-to Oëtes, of that contre king,
Preying him that he moste doon his assay
To gete the flees of gold, if that he may;
Of which the king assenteth to his bone,
And doth him honour, as hit is to done,
So ferforth, that his doghter and his eyr,
Medea, which that was so wys and fair
That fairer saw ther never man with yë,
He made her doon to Jasoun companye
At mete, and sitte by him in the halle.
Now was Jasoun a semely man withalle,
And lyk a lord, and had a greet renoun,
And of his loke as real as leoun,
And goodly of his speche, and famulere,
And coude of love al craft and art plenere
With-oute boke, with everich observaunce.
And, as fortune her oghte a foul meschaunce,
She wex enamoured upon this man.
'Jasoun,' quod she, 'for ought I see or can,
As of this thing the which ye been aboute,
Ye han your-self y-put in moche doute.
For, who-so wol this aventure acheve,
He may nat wel asterten, as I leve,
With-outen deeth, but I his helpe be.
But natheles, hit is my wille,' quod she,
'To forthren yow, so that ye shal nat dye,
But turnen, sound, hoom to your Tessalye.'
'My righte lady,' quod this Jasoun tho,
'That ye han of my dethe or of my wo
Any reward, and doon me this honour,
I wot wel that my might ne my labour
May nat deserve hit in my lyves day;
God thanke yow, ther I ne can ne may.
Your man am I, and lowly you beseche,
To been my help, with-oute more speche;
But certes, for my deeth shal I nat spare.'

Tho gan this Medea to him declare
The peril of this cas, fro point to point,
And of his batail, and in what disjoint
He mote stande, of which no creature,
Save only she, ne mighte his lyf assure.
And shortly, to the point right for to go,
They been accorded ful, betwix hem two,
That Jasoun shal her wedde, as trewe knight;
And term y-set, to come sone at night
Unto her chambre, and make ther his ooth,
Upon the goddes, that he, for leef ne looth,
Ne sholde her never falsen, night ne day,
To been her husbond, whyl he liven may,
As she that from his deeth him saved here.
And her-upon, at night they mette y-fere,
And doth his ooth, and goth with her to bedde.
And on the morwe, upward he him spedde;
For she hath taught him how he shal nat faile
The flees to winne, and stinten his bataile;
And saved him his lyf and his honour;
And gat him greet name as a conquerour
Right through the sleight of her enchantement.
Now hath Jasoun the flees, and hoom is went
With Medea, and tresor ful gret woon.
But unwist of her fader is she goon
To Tessaly, with duk Jasoun her leef,
That afterward hath broght her to mescheef.
For as a traitour he is from her go,
And with her lafte his yonge children two,
And falsly hath betrayed her, allas!
And ever in love a cheef traitour he was;
And wedded yit the thridde wyf anon,
That was the doghter of the king Creon.
This is the meed of loving and guerdoun
That Medea received of Jasoun
Right for her trouthe and for her kindenesse,
That loved him better than her-self, I gesse,
And lafte her fader and her heritage.
And of Jasoun this is the vassalage,
That, in his dayes, nas ther noon y-founde

So fals a lover going on the grounde.
And therfor in her lettre thus she seyde
First, whan she of his falsnesse him umbreyde,
'Why lyked me thy yelow heer to see
More then the boundes of myn honestee,
Why lyked me thy youthe and thy fairnesse,
And of thy tonge the infinit graciousnesse?
O, haddest thou in thy conquest deed y-be,
Ful mikel untrouthe had ther dyed with thee!'
Wel can Ovyde her lettre in vers endyte,
Which were as now to long for me to wryte.

Explicit Legenda Ysiphile et Medee, Martirum

V. THE LEGEND OF LUCRETIA

Incipit Legenda Lucrecie Rome, Martiris

Now moot I seyn the exiling of kinges
Of Rome, for hir horrible doinges,
And of the laste king Tarquinius,
As saith Ovyde and Titus Livius.
But for that cause telle I nat this storie,
But for to preise and drawen to memorie
The verray wyf, the verray trewe Lucresse,
That, for her wyfhood and her stedfastnesse,
Nat only that thise payens her comende,
But he, that cleped is in our legende
The grete Austin, hath greet compassioun
Of this Lucresse, that starf at Rome toun;
And in what wyse, I wol but shortly trete,
And of this thing I touche but the grete.
Whan Ardea beseged was aboute
With Romains, that ful sterne were and stoute,
Ful longe lay the sege, and litel wroghte,
So that they were half ydel, as hem thoghte;
And in his pley Tarquinius the yonge
Gan for to jape, for he was light of tonge,
And seyde, that 'it was an ydel lyf;
No man did ther no more than his wyf;
And lat us speke of wyves, that is best;
Praise every man his owne, as him lest,
And with our speche lat us ese our herte.'
A knight, that highte Colatyne, up sterte,

And seyde thus, 'nay, for hit is no nede
To trowen on the word, but on the dede.
I have a wyf,' quod he, 'that, as I trowe,
Is holden good of alle that ever her knowe;
Go we to-night to Rome, and we shul see.'
Tarquinius answerde, 'that lyketh me.'
To Rome be they come, and faste hem dighte
To Colatynes hous, and doun they lighte,
Tarquinius, and eek this Colatyne.
The husbond knew the estres wel and fyne,
And prively into the hous they goon;
Nor at the gate porter was ther noon;
And at the chambre-dore they abyde.
This noble wyf sat by her beddes syde
Dischevele, for no malice she ne thoghte;
And softe wolle our book seith that she wroghte
To kepen her fro slouthe and ydelnesse;
And bad her servants doon hir businesse,
And axeth hem, 'what tydings heren ye?
How seith men of the sege, how shal hit be?
God wolde the walles weren falle adoun;
Myn husbond is so longe out of this toun,
For which the dreed doth me so sore smerte,
Right as a swerd hit stingeth to myn herte
Whan I think on the sege or of that place;
God save my lord, I preye him for his grace':—
And ther-with-al ful tenderly she weep,
And of her werk she took no more keep,
But mekely she leet her eyen falle;
And thilke semblant sat her wel with-alle.
And eek her teres, ful of honestee,
Embelisshed her wyfly chastitee;
Her countenaunce is to her herte digne,
For they acordeden in dede and signe.
And with that word her husbond Colatyn,
Or she of him was war, com sterting in,
And seide, 'dreed thee noght, for I am here!'
And she anoon up roos, with blisful chere,
And kiste him, as of wyves is the wone.
Tarquinius, this proude kinges sone,

Conceived hath her beautee and her chere,
Her yelow heer, her shap, and her manere,
Her hew, her wordes that she hath compleyned,
And by no crafte her beautee nas nat feyned;
And caughte to this lady swich desyr,
That in his herte brende as any fyr
So woodly, that his wit was al forgeten.
For wel, thoghte he, she sholde nat be geten;
And ay the more that he was in dispair,
The more he coveteth and thoghte her fair.
His blinde lust was al his covetinge.
A-morwe, whan the brid began to singe,
Unto the sege he comth ful privily,
And by himself he walketh sobrely,
Th'image of her recording alwey newe;
'Thus lay her heer, and thus fresh was her hewe;
Thus sat, thus spak, thus span; this was her chere,
Thus fair she was, and this was her manere.'
Al this conceit his herte hath now y-take.
And, as the see, with tempest al to-shake,
That, after whan the storm is al ago,
Yet wol the water quappe a day or two,
Right so, thogh that her forme wer absent,
The plesaunce of her forme was present;
But natheles, nat plesaunce, but delyt,
Or an unrightful talent with despyt;
'For, maugre her, she shal my lemman be;
Hap helpeth hardy man alday,' quod he;
'What ende that I make, hit shal be so';
And girt him with his swerde, and gan to go;
And forth he rit til he to Rome is come,
And al aloon his wey than hath he nome
Unto the house of Colatyn ful right.
Doun was the sonne, and day hath lost his light;
And in he com un-to a privy halke,
And in the night ful theefly gan he stalke,
Whan every night was to his reste broght,
Ne no wight had of tresoun swich a thoght.
Were hit by window or by other gin,
With swerde y-drawe, shortly he comth in

Ther as she lay, this noble wyf Lucresse.
And, as she wook, her bed she felte presse.
'What beste is that,' quod she, 'that weyeth thus?'
'I am the kinges sone, Tarquinius,'
Quod he, 'but and thou crye, or noise make
Or if thou any creature awake,
By thilke god that formed man on lyve,
This swerd through-out thyn herte shal I ryve.'
And ther-withal unto her throte he sterte,
And sette the point al sharp upon her herte.
No word she spak, she hath no might therto.
What shal she sayn? her wit is al ago.
Right as a wolf that fynt a lomb aloon,
To whom shal she compleyne, or make moon?
What! shal she fighte with an hardy knight?
Wel wot men that a woman hath no might.
What! shal she crye, or how shal she asterte
That hath her by the throte, with swerde at herte?
She axeth grace, and seith al that she can.
'Ne wolt thou nat,' quod he, this cruel man,
'As wisly Jupiter my soule save,
As I shal in the stable slee thy knave,
And leye him in thy bed, and loude crye,
That I thee finde in suche avouterye;
And thus thou shalt be deed, and also lese
Thy name, for thou shalt non other chese.'
  Thise Romain wyves loveden so hir name
At thilke tyme, and dredden so the shame,
That, what for fere of slaundre and drede of deeth,
She loste bothe at-ones wit and breeth,
And in a swough she lay and wex so deed,
Men mighte smyten of her arm or heed;
She feleth no-thing, neither foul ne fair.
  Tarquinius, that art a kinges eyr,
And sholdest, as by linage and by right,
Doon as a lord and as a verray knight,
Why hastow doon dispyt to chivalrye?
Why hastow doon this lady vilanye?
Allas! of thee this was a vileins dede!
  But now to purpos; in the story I rede,

Whan he was goon, al this mischaunce is falle.
This lady sente after her frendes alle,
Fader, moder, husbond, al y-fere;
And al dischevele, with her heres clere,
In habit swich as women used tho
Unto the burying of her frendes go,
She sit in halle with a sorweful sighte.
Her frendes axen what her aylen mighte,
And who was deed? And she sit ay wepinge,
A word for shame ne may she forth outbringe,
Ne upon hem she dorste nat beholde.
But atte laste of Tarquiny she hem tolde,
This rewful cas, and al this thing horrible.
The wo to tellen hit were impossible,
That she and alle her frendes made atones.
Al hadde folkes hertes been of stones,
Hit mighte have maked hem upon her rewe,
Her herte was so wyfly and so trewe.
She seide, that, for her gilt ne for her blame,
Her husbond sholde nat have the foule name,
That wolde she nat suffre, by no wey.
And they answerden alle, upon hir fey,
That they foryeve hit her, for hit was right;
Hit was no gilt, hit lay nat in her might;
And seiden her ensamples many oon.
But al for noght; for thus she seide anoon,
'Be as be may,' quod she, 'of forgiving,
I wol nat have no forgift for no-thing.'
But prively she caughte forth a knyf,
And therwith-al she rafte her-self her lyf;
And as she fel adoun, she caste her look,
And of her clothes yit she hede took;
For in her falling yit she hadde care
Lest that her feet or swiche thing lay bare;
So wel she loved clennesse and eek trouthe.
Of her had al the toun of Rome routhe,
And Brutus by her chaste blode hath swore
That Tarquin sholde y-banisht be ther-fore,
And al his kin; and let the peple calle,
And openly the tale he tolde hem alle,

And openly let carie her on a bere
Through al the toun, that men may see and here
The horrible deed of her oppressioun.
Ne never was ther king in Rome toun
Sin thilke day; and she was holden there
A seint, and ever her day y-halwed dere
As in hir lawe. and thus endeth Lucresse,
The noble wyf, as Titus bereth witnesse.
I tell hit, for she was of love so trewe,
Ne in her wille she chaunged for no newe.
And for the stable herte, sad and kinde,
That in these women men may alday finde;
Ther as they caste hir herte, ther hit dwelleth.
For wel I wot, that Crist him-selve telleth,
That in Israel, as wyd as is the lond,
That so gret feith in al the lond he ne fond
As in a woman; and this is no lye.
And as of men, loketh which tiraunye
They doon alday; assay hem who so liste,
The trewest is ful brotel for to triste.

Explicit Legenda Lucrecie Rome, Martiris

VI. THE LEGEND OF ARIADNE

Incipit Legenda Adriane de Athenes

Juge infernal, Minos, of Crete king,
Now cometh thy lot, now comestow on the ring;
Nat for thy sake only wryte I this storie,
But for to clepe agein unto memorie
Of Theseus the grete untrouthe of love;
For which the goddes of the heven above
Ben wrothe, and wreche han take for thy sinne.
Be reed for shame! now I thy lyf beginne.
Minos, that was the mighty king of Crete,
That hadde an hundred citees stronge and grete,
To scole hath sent his sone Androgeus,
To Athenes; of the whiche hit happed thus,
That he was slayn, lerning philosophye,
Right in that citee, nat but for envye.
The grete Minos, of the whiche I speke,
His sones deeth is comen for to wreke;
Alcathoe he bisegeth harde and longe.
But natheles the walles be so stronge,
And Nisus, that was king of that citee,
So chivalrous, that litel dredeth he;
Of Minos or his ost took he no cure,
Til on a day befel an aventure,
That Nisus doghter stood upon the wal,
And of the sege saw the maner al.
So happed hit, that, at a scarmishing,
She caste her herte upon Minos the king,

For his beautee and for his chivalyre,
So sore, that she wende for to dye.
And, shortly of this proces for to pace,
She made Minos winnen thilke place,
So that the citee was al at his wille,
To saven whom him list, or elles spille;
But wikkedly he quitte her kindenesse,
And let her drenche in sorowe and distresse,
Nere that the goddes hadde of her pite;
But that tale were to long as now for me.
Athenes wan this king Minos also,
And Alcathoe and other tounes mo;
And this th'effect, that Minos hath so driven
Hem of Athenes, that they mote him yiven
Fro yere to yere her owne children dere
For to be slayn, as ye shul after here.
This Minos hath a monstre, a wikked beste,
That was so cruel that, without areste,
Whan that a man was broght in his presence,
He wolde him ete, ther helpeth no defence.
And every thridde yeer, with-outen doute,
They casten lot, and, as hit com aboute
On riche, on pore he moste his sone take,
And of his child he moste present make
Unto Minos, to save him or to spille,
Or lete his beste devoure him at his wille.
And this hath Minos don, right in despyt;
To wreke his sone was set al his delyt,
And maken hem of Athenes his thral
Fro yere to yere, whyl that he liven shal;
And hoom he saileth whan this toun is wonne.
This wikked custom is so longe y-ronne
Til that of Athenes king Egeus
Mot sende his owne sone, Theseus,
Sith that the lot is fallen him upon,
To be devoured, for grace is ther non.
And forth is lad this woful yonge knight
Unto the court of king Minos ful right,
And in a prison, fetered, cast is he
Til thilke tyme he sholde y-freten be.

Wel maystow wepe, O woful Theseus,
That art a kinges sone, and dampned thus.
Me thinketh this, that thou were depe y-holde
To whom that saved thee fro cares colde!
And now, if any woman helpe thee,
Wel oughtestow her servant for to be,
And been her trewe lover yeer by yere:
But now to come ageyn to my matere.

The tour, ther as this Theseus is throwe
Doun in the botom derke and wonder lowe,
Was joyning in the walle to a foreyne;
And hit was longing to the doghtren tweyne
Of king Minos, that in hir chambres grete
Dwelten above, toward the maister-strete,
In mochel mirthe, in joye and in solas.
Not I nat how, hit happed ther, per cas,
As Theseus compleyned him by nighte,
The kinges doghter, Adrian that highte,
And eek her suster Phedra, herden al
His compleyning, as they stode on the wal
And lokeden upon the brighte mone;
Hem leste nat to go to bedde sone.
And of his wo they had compassioun;
A kinges sone to ben in swich prisoun
And be devoured, thoughte hem gret pitee.

Than Adrian spak to her suster free,
And seyde, 'Phedra, leve suster dere,
This woful lordes sone may ye nat here,
How pitously compleyneth he his kin,
And eek his pore estat that he is in,
And gilteless? now certes, hit is routhe!
And if ye wol assenten, by my trouthe,
He shal be holpen, how so that we do!'

Phedra answerde, 'y-wis, me is as wo
For him as ever I was for any man;
And, to his help, the beste reed I can
Is that we doon the gayler prively
To come, and speke with us hastily,
And doon this woful man with him to come.
For if he may this monstre overcome,

Than were he quit; ther is noon other bote.
Lat us wel taste him at his herte-rote,
That, if so be that he a wepen have,
Wher that he dar, his lyf to kepe and save,
Fighten with this fend, and him defende.
For, in the prison, ther he shal descende,
Ye wite wel, that the beste is in a place
That nis nat derk, and hath roum eek and space
To welde an ax or swerd or staf or knyf,
So that, me thinketh, he sholde save his lyf;
If that he be a man, he shal do so.
And we shul make him balles eek also
Of wexe and towe, that, whan he gapeth faste,
Into the bestes throte he shal hem caste
To slake his hunger and encombre his teeth;
And right anon, whan that Theseus seeth
The beste achoked, he shal on him lepe
To sleen him, or they comen more to-hepe.
This wepen shal the gayler, or that tyde,
Ful privily within the prison hyde;
And, for the hous is crinkled to and fro,
And hath so queinte weyes for to go—
For hit is shapen as the mase is wroght—
Therto have I a remedie in my thoght,
That, by a clewe of twyne, as he hath goon,
The same wey he may returne anoon,
Folwing alwey the threed, as he hath come.
And, whan that he this beste hath overcome,
Then may he fleen awey out of this drede,
And eek the gayler may he with him lede,
And him avaunce at hoom in his contree,
Sin that so greet a lordes sone is he.
This is my reed, if that he dar hit take.'
What sholde I lenger sermoun of hit make?
The gayler cometh, and with him Theseus.
And whan thise thinges been acorded thus,
Adoun sit Theseus upon his knee:—
'The righte lady of my lyf,' quod he,
'I, sorweful man, y-dampned to the deeth,
Fro yow, whyl that me lasteth lyf or breeth,

I wol nat twinne, after this aventure,
But in your servise thus I wol endure,
That, as a wrecche unknowe, I wol yow serve
For ever-mo, til that myn herte sterve.
Forsake I wol at hoom myn heritage,
And, as I seide, ben of your court a page,
If that ye vouche-sauf that, in this place,
Ye graunte me to han so gret a grace
That I may han nat but my mete and drinke;
And for my sustenance yit wol I swinke,
Right as yow list, that Minos ne no wight—
Sin that he saw me never with eyen sight—
Ne no man elles, shal me conne espye;
So slyly and so wel I shal me gye,
And me so wel disfigure and so lowe,
That in this world ther shal no man me knowe,
To han my lyf, and for to han presence
Of yow, that doon to me this excellence.
And to my fader shal I senden here
This worthy man, that is now your gaylere,
And, him to guerdon, that he shal wel be
Oon of the grettest men of my contree.
And yif I dorste seyn, my lady bright,
I am a kinges sone, and eek a knight;
As wolde god, yif that hit mighte be
Ye weren in my contree, alle three,
And I with yow, to bere yow companye,
Than shulde ye seen yif that I ther-of lye!
And, if I profre yow in low manere
To ben your page and serven yow right here,
But I yow serve as lowly in that place,
I prey to Mars to yive me swiche a grace
That shames deeth on me ther mote falle,
And deeth and povert to my frendes alle;
And that my spirit by nighte mote go
After my deeth, and walke to and fro;
That I mote of a traitour have a name,
For which my spirit go, to do me shame!
And yif I ever claime other degree,
But-if ye vouche-sauf to yive hit me,

As I have seid, of shames deeth I deye !
And mercy, lady ! I can nat elles seye !'
A seemly knight was Theseus to see,
And yong, but of a twenty yeer and three ;
But who-so hadde y-seyn his countenaunce,
He wolde have wept, for routhe of his penaunce ;
For which this Adriane in this manere
Answerde to his profre and to his chere.
'A kinges sone, and eek a knight,' quod she,
'To been my servant in so low degree,
God shilde hit, for the shame of women alle !
And leve me never swich a cas befalle !
But sende yow grace and sleighte of herte also,
Yow to defende and knightly sleen your fo,
And leve herafter that I may yow finde
To me and to my suster here so kinde,
That I repente nat to give yow lyf !
Yit were hit better that I were your wyf,
Sin that ye been as gentil born as I,
And have a rëaume, nat but faste by,
Then that I suffred giltles yow to sterve,
Or that I let yow as a page serve ;
Hit is not profit, as unto your kinrede ;
But what is that that man nil do for drede ?
And to my suster, sin that hit is so
That she mot goon with me, if that I go,
Or elles suffre deeth as wel as I,
That ye unto your sone as trewely
Doon her be wedded at your hoom-coming.
This is the fynal ende of al this thing ;
Ye swere hit heer, on al that may be sworn.'
'Ye, lady myn,' quod he, 'or elles torn
Mote I be with the Minotaur to-morwe !
And haveth her-of my herte-blood to borwe,
Yif that ye wile ; if I had knyf or spere,
I wolde hit leten out, and ther-on swere,
For than at erst I wot ye wil me leve.
By Mars, that is the cheef of my bileve,
So that I mighte liven and nat faile
To-morwe for t'acheve my bataile,

I nolde never fro this place flee,
Til that ye shuld the verray preve see.
For now, if that the sooth I shal yow say,
I have y-loved yow ful many a day,
Thogh ye ne wiste hit nat, in my contree.
And aldermost desyred yow to see
Of any erthly living creature;
Upon my trouthe I swere, and yow assure,
Thise seven yeer I have your servant be;
Now have I yow, and also have ye me,
My dere herte, of Athenes duchesse!'
This lady smyleth at his stedfastnesse,
And at his hertly wordes, and his chere,
And to her suster seide in this manere,
Al softely, 'now, suster myn,' quod she,
'Now be we duchesses, bothe I and ye,
And sikered to the regals of Athenes,
And bothe her-after lykly to be quenes,
And saved fro his deeth a kinges sone,
As ever of gentil women is the wone
To save a gentil man, emforth hir might,
In honest cause, and namely in his right.
Me thinketh no wight oghte her-of us blame,
Ne beren us ther-for an evel name.'
And shortly of this matere for to make,
This Theseus of her hath leve y-take,
And every point performed was in dede
As ye have in this covenant herd me rede.
His wepen, his clew, his thing that I have said
Was by the gayler in the hous y-laid
Ther as this Minotaur hath his dwelling,
Right faste by the dore, at his entring.
And Theseus is lad unto his deeth,
And forth un-to this Minotaur he geeth,
And by the teching of this Adriane
He overcom this beste, and was his bane;
And out he cometh by the clewe again
Ful prevely, whan he this beste hath slain;
And by the gayler geten hath a barge,
And of his wyves tresor gan hit charge,

And took his wyf, and eek her suster free,
And eek the gayler, and with hem alle three
Is stole awey out of the lond by nighte,
And to the contre of Ennopye him dighte
Ther as he had a frend of his knowinge.
Ther festen they, ther dauncen they and singe ;
And in his armes hath this Adriane,
That of the beste hath kept him from his bane ;
And gat him ther a newe barge anoon,
And of his contree-folk a ful gret woon,
And taketh his leve, and hoomward saileth he.
And in an yle, amid the wilde see,
Ther as ther dwelte creature noon
Save wilde bestes, and that ful many oon,
He made his ship a-londe for to sette ;
And in that yle half a day he lette,
And seide, that on the lond he moste him reste.
His mariners han doon right as him leste ;
And, for to tellen shortly in this cas,
Whan Adriane his wyf a-slepe was,
For that her suster fairer was than she,
He taketh her in his hond, and forth goth he
To shippe, and as a traitour stal his way
Whyl that this Adriane a-slepe lay,
And to his contree-ward he saileth blyve—
A twenty devil way the wind him dryve !—
And fond his fader drenched in the see.
Me list no more to speke of him, parde ;
Thise false lovers, poison be hir bane !
But I wol turne again to Adriane
That is with slepe for werinesse atake.
Ful sorwefully hir herte may awake.
Allas ! for thee my herte hath now pite !
Right in the dawening awaketh she,
And gropeth in the bedde, and fond right noght.
'Allas !' quod she, 'that ever I was wroght !
I am betrayed !' and her heer to-rente,
And to the stronde bar-fot faste she wente,
And cryed, 'Theseus ! myn herte swete !

Wher be ye, that I may nat with yow mete,
And mighte thus with bestes been y-slain?'
The holwe rokkes answerde her again;
No man she saw, and yit shyned the mone,
And hye upon a rokke she wente sone,
And saw his barge sailing in the see.
Cold wex her herte, and right thus seide she,
'Meker than ye finde I the bestes wilde!'
Hadde he nat sinne, that her thus begylde?
She cryed, 'O turne again, for routhe and sinne!
Thy barge hath nat al his meiny inne!'
Her kerchef on a pole up stikked she,
Ascaunce that he sholde hit wel y-see,
And him remembre that she was behinde,
And turne again, and on the stronde her finde;
But al for noght; his wey he is y-goon.
And doun she fil a-swown upon a stoon;
And up she rist, and kiste, in al her care,
The steppes of his feet, ther he hath fare,
And to her bedde right thus she speketh tho:—
'Thou bed,' quod she, 'that hast receyved two,
Thou shalt answere of two, and nat of oon!
Wher is thy gretter part away y-goon?
Allas! wher shal I, wrecched wight, become!
For, thogh so be that ship or boot heer come,
Hoom to my contree dar I nat for drede;
I can my-selven in this cas nat rede!'
What shal I telle more her compleining?
Hit is so long, hit were an hevy thing.
In her epistle Naso telleth al;
But shortly to the ende I telle shal.
The goddes have her holpen, for pitee;
And, in the signe of Taurus, men may see
The stones of her coroun shyne clere.—
I wol no more speke of this matere;
But thus this false lover can begyle
His trewe love. The devil him quyte his whyle!

Explicit Legenda Adriane de Athenes

VII. THE LEGEND OF PHILOMELA

Incipit Legenda Philomene

Deus dator formarum

Thou yiver of the formes, that hast wroght
The faire world, and bare hit in thy thoght
Eternally, or thou thy werk began,
Why madest thou, unto the slaundre of man,
Or—al be that hit was not thy doing,
As for that fyn to make swiche a thing—
Why suffrest thou that Tereus was bore,
That is in love so fals and so forswore,
That, fro this world up to the firste hevene,
Corrumpeth, whan that folk his name nevene?
And, as to me, so grisly was his dede,
That, whan that I his foule story rede,
Myn eyen wexen foule and sore also;
Yit last the venim of so longe ago,
That hit enfecteth him that wol beholde
The story of Tereus, of which I tolde.
Of Trace was he lord, and kin to Marte,
The cruel god that stant with blody darte;
And wedded had he, with a blisful chere,
King Pandiones faire doghter dere,
That highte Progne, flour of her contree,
Thogh Juno list nat at the feste be,
Ne Ymeneus, that god of wedding is;
But at the feste redy been, y-wis,
The furies three, with alle hir mortel brond.
The owle al night aboute the balkes wond,

That prophet is of wo and of mischaunce.
This revel, ful of songe and ful of daunce,
Lasteth a fourtenight, or litel lasse.
But, shortly of this story for to passe,
For I am wery of him for to telle,
Five yeer his wyf and he togeder dwelle,
Til on a day she gan so sore longe
To seen her suster, that she saw nat longe,
That for desyr she niste what to seye.
But to her husband gan she for to preye,
For goddes love, that she moste ones goon
Her suster for to seen, and come anoon,
Or elles, but she moste to her wende,
She preyde him, that he wolde after her sende;
And this was, day by day, al her prayere
With al humblenesse of wyfhood, word, and chere.
This Tereus let make his shippes yare,
And into Grece him-self is forth y-fare
Unto his fader in lawe, and gan him preye
To vouche-sauf that, for a month or tweye,
That Philomene, his wyves suster, mighte
On Progne his wyf but ones have a sighte—
'And she shal come to yow again anoon.
Myself with her wol bothe come and goon,
And as myn hertes lyf I wol her kepe.'
This olde Pandion, this king, gan wepe
For tendernesse of herte, for to leve
His doghter goon, and for to yive her leve;
Of al this world he lovede no-thing so;
But at the laste leve hath she to go.
For Philomene, with salte teres eke,
Gan of her fader grace to beseke
To seen her suster, that her longeth so;
And him embraceth with her armes two.
And therwith-al so yong and fair was she
That, whan that Terëus saw her beautee,
And of array that ther was noon her liche,
And yit of bountee was she two so riche,
He caste his fyry herte upon her so
That he wol have her, how so that hit go,

And with his wyles kneled and so preyde,
Til at the laste Pandion thus seyde :—
'Now, sone,' quod he, 'that art to me so dere,
I thee betake my yonge doghter here,
That bereth the key of al my hertes lyf.
And grete wel my doghter and thy wyf,
And yive her leve somtyme for to pleye,
That she may seen me ones er I deye.'
And soothly, he hath mad him riche feste,
And to his folk, the moste and eek the leste,
That with him com ; and yaf him yiftes grete,
And him conveyeth through the maister-strete
Of Athenes, and to the see him broghte,
And turneth hoom ; no malice he ne thoghte.
The ores pulleth forth the vessel faste,
And into Trace arriveth at the laste,
And up into a forest he her ledde,
And to a cave privily him spedde ;
And, in this derke cave, yif her leste,
Or leste noght, he bad her for to reste ;
Of whiche her herte agroos, and seyde thus,
'Wher is my suster, brother Tereus?'
And therwith-al she wepte tenderly,
And quook for fere, pale and pitously,
Right as the lamb that of the wolf is biten ;
Or as the colver, that of the egle is smiten,
And is out of his clawes forth escaped,
Yet hit is afered and awhaped
Lest hit be hent eft-sones, so sat she.
But utterly hit may non other be.
By force hath he, this traitour, doon that dede,
That he hath reft her of her mayden-hede,
Maugree her heed, by strengthe and by his might
Lo ! here a dede of men, and that a right !
She cryeth 'suster !' with ful loud stevene,
And 'fader dere !' and 'help me, god in heveue !'
Al helpeth nat ; and yet this false theef
Hath doon this lady yet a more mischeef,
For fere lest she sholde his shame crye,
And doon him openly a vilanye,

And with his swerd her tong of kerveth he,
And in a castel made her for to be
Ful privily in prison evermore,
And kepte her to his usage and his store,
So that she mighte him nevermore asterte.
O sely Philomene ! wo is thyn herte ;
God wreke thee, and sende thee thy bone !
Now is hit tyme I make an ende sone.
This Tereus is to his wyf y-come,
And in his armes hath his wyf y-nome,
And pitously he weep, and shook his heed,
And swor her that he fond her suster deed ;
For which this sely Progne hath swich wo,
That ny her sorweful herte brak a-two ;
And thus in teres lete I Progne dwelle,
And of her suster forth I wol yow telle.
This woful lady lerned had in youthe
So that she werken and enbrouden couthe,
And weven in her stole the radevore
As hit of women hath be woned yore.
And, shortly for to seyn, she hath her fille
Of mete and drink, and clothing at her wille,
And coude eek rede, and wel y-nogh endyte,
But with a penne coude she nat wryte ;
But lettres can she weven to and fro,
So that, by that the yeer was al a-go,
She had y-woven in a stamin large
How she was broght from Athenes in a barge,
And in a cave how that she was broght ;
And al the thing that Tereus hath wroght,
She waf hit wel, and wroot the story above,
How she was served for her suster love ;
And to a knave a ring she yaf anoon,
And prayed him, by signes, for to goon
Unto the quene, and beren her that clooth,
And by signes swor him many an ooth,
She sholde him yeve what she geten mighte.
This knave anoon unto the quene him dighte,
And took hit her, and al the maner tolde.
And, whan that Progne hath this thing beholde,

No word she spak, for sorwe and eek for rage;
But feyned her to goon on pilgrimage
To Bachus temple; and, in a litel stounde,
Her dombe suster sitting hath she founde,
Weping in the castel her aloon.
Allas! the wo, the compleint, and the moon
That Progne upon her dombe suster maketh!
In armes everich of hem other taketh,
And thus I lete hem in hir sorwe dwelle.
The remenant is no charge for to telle,
For this is al and som, thus was she served,
That never harm a-gilte ne deserved
Unto this cruel man, that she of wiste.
Ye may be war of men, yif that yow liste.
For, al be that he wol nat, for his shame,
Doon so as Tereus, to lese his name,
Ne serve yow as a mordrour or a knave,
Ful litel whyle shul ye trewe him have,
That wol I seyn, al were he now my brother
But hit so be that he may have non other.

Explicit Legenda Philomene

VIII. THE LEGEND OF PHYLLIS

Incipit Legenda Phillis

By preve as wel as by auctoritee,
That wikked fruit cometh of a wikked tree,
That may ye finde, if that it lyketh yow.
But for this ende I speke this as now,
To telle you of false Demophon.
In love a falser herde I never non,
But-if hit were his fader Theseus.
'God, for his grace, fro swich oon kepe us!'
Thus may thise women prayen that hit here.
Now to th'effect turne I of my matere.
Destroyed is of Troye the citee;
This Demophon com sailing in the see
Towards Athenes, to his paleys large;
With him com many a ship and many a barge
Ful of his folk, of which ful many oon
Is wounded sore, and seek, and wo begoon.
And they han at the sege longe y-lain.
Behinde him com a wind and eek a rain
That shoof so sore, his sail ne mighte stonde,
Him were lever than al the world a-londe,
So hunteth him the tempest to and fro.
So derk hit was, he coude nowher go;
And with a wawe brosten was his stere.
His ship was rent so lowe, in swich manere,
That carpenter ne coude hit nat amende.
The see, by nighte, as any torche brende

For wood, and posseth him now up now doun,
Til Neptune hath of him compassioun,
And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and they alle,
And maden him upon a lond to falle,
Wher-of that Phillis lady was and quene,
Ligurgus doghter, fairer on to sene
Than is the flour again the brighte sonne.
Unnethe is Demophon to londe y-wonne,
Wayk and eek wery, and his folk forpyned
Of werinesse, and also enfamyned;
And to the deeth he almost was y-driven.
His wyse folk to conseil han him yiven
To seken help and socour of the queen,
And loken what his grace mighte been,
And maken in that lond som chevisaunce,
To kepen him fro wo and fro mischaunce.
For seek was he, and almost at the deeth;
Unnethe mighte he speke or drawe his breeth,
And lyth in Rodopeya him for to reste.
Whan he may walke, him thoughte hit was the beste
Unto the court to seken for socour.
Men knewe him wel, and diden him honour;
For at Athenes duk and lord was he,
As Theseus his fader hadde y-be,
That in his tyme was of greet renoun,
No man so greet in al his regioun;
And lyk his fader of face and of stature,
And fals of love; hit com him of nature;
As doth the fox Renard, the foxes sone,
Of kinde he coude his olde faders wone
Withoute lore, as can a drake swimme,
Whan hit is caught and caried to the brimme.
This honourable Phillis doth him chere,
Her lyketh wel his port and his manere.
But for I am agroted heer-biforn
To wryte of hem that been in love forsworn,
And eek to haste me in my legende,
Which to performe god me grace sende,
Therfor I passe shortly in this wyse;
Ye han wel herd of Theseus devyse

In the betraising of fair Adriane,
That of her pite kepte him from his bane.
At shorte wordes, right so Demophon
The same wey, the same path hath gon
That dide his false fader Theseus.
For unto Phillis hath he sworen thus,
To wedden her, and her his trouthe plighte,
And piked of her al the good he mighte,
Whan he was hool and sound and hadde his reste;
And doth with Phillis what so that him leste.
And wel coude I, yif that me leste so,
Tellen al his doing to and fro.
He seide, unto his contree moste he saile,
For ther he wolde her wedding apparaile
As fil to her honour and his also.
And openly he took his leve tho,
And hath her sworn, he wolde nat sojorne,
But in a month he wolde again retorne.
And in that lond let make his ordinaunce
As verray lord, and took the obeisaunce
Wel and hoomly, and let his shippes dighte,
And hoom he goth the nexte wey he mighte;
For unto Phillis yit ne com he noght.
And that hath she so harde and sore aboght,
Allas! that, as the stories us recorde,
She was her owne deeth right with a corde,
Whan that she saw that Demophon her trayed.
But to him first she wroot and faste him prayed
He wolde come, and her deliver of peyne,
As I reherse shal a word or tweyne.
Me list nat vouche-sauf on him to swinke,
Ne spende on him a penne ful of inke,
For fals in love was he, right as his syre;
The devil sette hir soules bothe a-fyre!
But of the lettre of Phillis wol I wryte
A word or tweyne, al-thogh hit be but lyte.
'Thyn hostesse,' quod she, 'O Demophon,
Thy Phillis, which that is so wo begon,
Of Rodopeye, upon yow moot compleyne,
Over the terme set betwix us tweyne,

That ye ne holden forward, as ye seyde ;
Your anker, which ye in our haven leyde,
Highte us, that ye wolde comen, out of doute,
Or that the mone ones wente aboute.
But tymes foure the mone hath hid her face
Sin thilke day ye wente fro this place,
And foure tymes light the world again.
But for al that, yif I shal soothly sain,
Yit hath the streem of Sitho nat y-broght
From Athenes the ship ; yit comth hit noght.
And, yif that ye the terme rekne wolde,
As I or other trewe lovers sholde,
I pleyne not, god wot, beforn my day.'—
But al her lettre wryten I ne may
By ordre, for hit were to me a charge ;
Her lettre was right long and ther-to large ;
But here and there in ryme I have hit laid,
Ther as me thoughte that she wel hath said.—
She seide, 'thy sailes comen nat again,
Ne to thy word ther nis no fey certein ;
But I wot why ye come nat,' quod she ;
'For I was of my love to you so free.
And of the goddes that ye han forswore,
Yif that hir vengeance falle on yow therfore,
Ye be nat suffisaunt to bere the peyne.
To moche trusted I, wel may I pleyne,
Upon your linage and your faire tonge,
And on your teres falsly out y-wronge.
How coude ye wepe so by craft?' quod she ;
'May ther swiche teres feyned be?
Now certes, yif ye wolde have in memorie,
Hit oghte be to yow but litel glorie
To have a sely mayde thus betrayed !
To god,' quod she, 'preye I, and ofte have prayed,
That hit be now the grettest prys of alle,
And moste honour that ever yow shal befalle !
And whan thyn olde auncestres peynted be,
In which men may hir worthinesse see,
Than, preye I god, thou peynted be also,
That folk may reden, for-by as they go,

"Lo! this is he, that with his flaterye
Betrayed hath and doon her vilanye
That was his trewe love in thoghte and dede!"
But sothly, of oo point yit may they rede,
That ye ben lyk your fader as in this;
For he begyled Adriane, y-wis,
With swiche an art and swiche sotelte
As thou thy-selven hast begyled me.
As in that point, al-thogh hit be nat fayr,
Thou folwest him, certein, and art his eyr.
But sin thus sinfully ye me begyle,
My body mote ye seen, within a whyle,
Right in the haven of Athenes fletinge,
With-outen sepulture and buryinge;
Thogh ye ben harder then is any stoon.'
And, whan this lettre was forth sent anoon,
And knew how brotel and how fals he was,
She for dispeyr for-dide herself, allas!
Swich sorwe hath she, for she besette her so.
Be war, ye women, of your sotil fo,
Sin yit this day men may ensample see;
And trusteth, as in love, no man but me.

Explicit Legenda Phillis

IX. THE LEGEND OF HYPERMNESTRA

Incipit Legenda Ypermistre

In Grece whylom weren brethren two,
Of whiche that oon was called Danao,
That many a sone hath of his body wonne,
As swiche false lovers ofte conne.
Among his sones alle ther was oon
That aldermost he lovede of everichoon.
And whan this child was born, this Danao
Shoop him a name, and called him Lino.
That other brother called was Egiste,
That was of love as fals as ever him liste,
And many a doghter gat he in his lyve;
Of which he gat upon his righte wyve
A doghter dere, and dide her for to calle
Ypermistra, yongest of hem alle;
The whiche child, of her nativitee,
To alle gode thewes born was she,
As lyked to the goddes, or she was born,
That of the shefe she sholde be the corn;
The Wirdes, that we clepen Destinee,
Hath shapen her that she mot nedes be
Pitouse, sadde, wyse, and trewe as steel;
And to this woman hit accordeth weel.
For, though that Venus yaf her greet beautee,
With Jupiter compouned so was she
That conscience, trouthe, and dreed of shame,
And of her wyfhood for to kepe her name,

This, thoughte her, was felicitee as here.
And rede Mars was, that tyme of the yere,
So feble, that his malice is him raft,
Repressed hath Venus his cruel craft;
What with Venus and other oppressioun
Of houses, Mars his venim is adoun,
That Ypermistra dar nat handle a knyf
In malice, thogh she sholde lese her lyf.
But natheles, as heven gan tho turne,
To badde aspectes hath she of Saturne,
That made her for to deyen in prisoun,
As I shal after make mencioun.
To Danao and Egistes also—
Al-thogh so be that they were brethren two,
For thilke tyme nas spared no linage—
Hit lyked hem to maken mariage
Betwix Ypermistra and him Lino,
And casten swiche a day hit shal be so;
And ful acorded was hit witterly;
The array is wroght, the tyme is faste by.
And thus Lino hath of his fadres brother
The doghter wedded, and eche of hem hath other.
The torches brennen and the lampes brighte,
The sacrifices been ful redy dighte;
Th'encens out of the fyre reketh sote,
The flour, the leef is rent up by the rote
To maken garlands and corounes hye;
Ful is the place of soun of minstralcye,
Of songes amorous of mariage,
As thilke tyme was the pleyn usage.
And this was in the paleys of Egiste,
That in his hous was lord, right as him liste;
And thus the day they dryven to an ende;
The frendes taken leve, and hoom they wende.
The night is come, the bryd shal go to bedde;
Egiste to his chambre faste him spedde,
And privily he let his doghter calle.
Whan that the hous was voided of hem alle,
He loked on his doghter with glad chere,
And to her spak, as ye shul after here.

'My righte doghter, tresor of myn herte!
Sin first that day that shapen was my sherte,
Or by the fatal sustren had my dom,
So ny myn herte never thing me com
As thou, myn Ypermistra, doghter dere!
Tak heed what I thy fader sey thee here,
And werk after thy wyser ever-mo.
For alderfirste, doghter, I love thee so
That al the world to me nis half so leef;
Ne I nolde rede thee to thy mischeef
For al the gode under the colde mone;
And what I mene, hit shal be seid right sone,
With protestacioun, as in this wyse,
That, but thou do as I shal thee devyse,
Thou shalt be deed, by him that al hath wroght!
At shorte wordes, thou n'escapest noght
Out of my paleys, or that thou be deed,
But thou consente and werke after my reed;
Tak this to thee for ful conclusioun.'

This Ypermistra caste her eyen doun,
And quook as dooth the leef of aspe grene;
Deed wex her hewe, and lyk as ash to sene,
And seyde, 'lord and fader, al your wille,
After my might, god wot, I shal fulfille,
So hit to me be no confusioun.'

'I nil,' quod he, 'have noon excepcioun';
And out he caughte a knyf, as rasour kene;
'Hyd this,' quod he, 'that hit be nat y-sene;
And, whan thyn husbond is to bedde y-go,
Whyl that he slepeth, cut his throte a-two.
For in my dremes hit is warned me
How that my nevew shal my bane be,
But whiche I noot, wherfor I wol be siker.
Yif thou sey nay, we two shul have a biker
As I have seyd, by him that I have sworn.'

This Ypermistra hath ny her wit forlon;
And, for to passen harmles of that place,
She graunted him; ther was non other grace.
And therwith-al a costrel taketh he,
And seyde, 'herof a draught, or two or three;

Yif him to drinke, whan he goth to reste,
And he shal slepe as longe as ever thee leste,
The narcotiks and opies been so stronge :
And go thy wey, lest that him thinke longe.'
Out comth the bryd, and with ful sober chere,
As is of maidens ofte the manere,
To chambre is broght with revel and with songe,
And shortly, lest this tale be to longe,
This Lino and she ben sone broght to bedde ;
And every wight out at the dore him spedde.
The night is wasted, and he fel a-slepe ;
Ful tenderly beginneth she to wepe.
She rist her up, and dredfully she quaketh,
As doth the braunche that Zephirus shaketh,
And husht were alle in Argon that citee.
As cold as any frost now wexeth she ;
For pite by the herte her streyneth so,
And dreed of deeth doth her so moche wo,
That thryes doun she fil in swiche a were.
She rist her up, and stakereth heer and there,
And on her handes faste loketh she.
'Allas ! and shul my handes blody be ?
I am a maid, and, as by my nature,
And by my semblant and by my vesture,
Myn handes been nat shapen for a knyf,
As for to reve no man fro his lyf.
What devil have I with the knyf to do ?
And shal I have my throte corve a-two ?
Then shal I blede, allas ! and me be-shende ;
And nedes cost this thing mot have an ende ;
Or he or I mot nedes lese our lyf.
Now certes,' quod she, 'sin I am his wyf,
And hath my feith, yit it is bet for me
For to be deed in wyfly honestee
Than be a traitour living in my shame.
Be as be may, for ernest or for game,
He shal awake, and ryse and go his way
Out at this goter, or that hit be day !'—
And weep ful tenderly upon his face,
And in her armes gan him to embrace,

And him she roggeth and awaketh softe ;
And at the window leep he fro the lofte
Whan she hath warned him, and doon him bote.
This Lino swifte was, and light of fote,
And from his wyf he ran a ful good pas.
This sely woman is so wayk, allas !
And helples so, that, or that she fer wente,
Her cruel fader dide her for to hente.
Allas ! Lino ! why art thou so unkinde ?
Why ne haddest thou remembred in thy minde
To taken her, and lad her forth with thee ?
For, whan she saw that goon awey was he,
And that she mighte nat so faste go,
Ne folwen him, she sette her doun right tho,
Til she was caught and fetered in prisoun.
This tale is seid for this conclusioun. . . .

(*Unfinished*)

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Further Volumes are in preparation.

September 1937.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN